THE MAN WHO DARED TO BE GOD

ROBERT NORWOOD

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BOOKS BY ROBERT NORWOOD

THE STEEP ASCENT

THE HERESY OF ANTIOCH

MOTHER AND SON

HIS LADY OF THE SONNETS

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

THE PIPER AND THE REED

THE MODERNISTS

THE MAN OF KERIOTH

BILL BORAM

THE MAN WHO DARED TO BE GOD

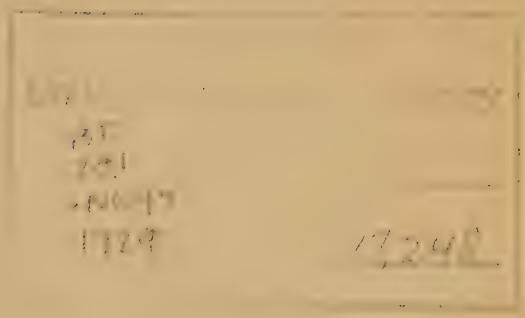
THE MAN WHO DARED TO BE GOD

A STORY OF JESUS

BY

ROBERT NORWOOD

RECTOR OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



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NEW YORK · LONDON

1929

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TO
THE CHILDREN OF
THIS GENERATION

FOREWORD

ONCE upon a time, an aging Greek doctor of medicine and surgery wrote a little book for a young college man. The doctor's name was Luke. He wrote his book for Theophilus. The book was about Jesus.

Doctor Luke was brought up in Troas. He was a Greek. No one knows what college graduated him, but almost everybody knows that he was the travelling companion of Paul. From Paul, Luke learned about Jesus and shared in his enthusiasm for the crucified Galilean Carpenter.

Neither Luke nor Paul had ever seen Jesus! Strange. And yet they acted as though they had. Together they travelled over sea and land, daring, enduring, undaunted. Wherever they went, they were mocked, maligned, persecuted, for preaching about Jesus. But they had their victories, and gradually those who laughed or resisted surrendered to the magic of Jesus' name.

Somewhere in the course of their wandering, a young college man was moved by the sound of that name . . . Jesus! How musical, how

stirring and challenging! . . . Theophilus was haunted through the day by its sound, and at night, as he glanced through his lecture-notes, his imagination was troubled by confused pictures of the Galilean: Who was Jesus? Did he indeed heal the sick, give sight to the blind, raise the dead? How far could he follow the Man of Nazareth?

Theophilus belonged to that time when civilization was decadent. Society was leprous with immorality, greed, impertinence, and cruelty. The gods were dead. It was fashionable to be either an atheist or an agnostic. All the clever men denied the soul, and if anybody argued in its defense, he was easily silenced by the logic of Lucretius, whose "De Rerum Natura" was held to be the final word on the matter. The gods were inventions of ignorant primitives. No man had ever seen a god or a goddess. Prayers were foolish. Why pray to atoms and energy? *Anangke* was the only god—necessity. Things were not ordered, they happened; and the best that a man could do was to seize his brief day and enjoy it.

Into this dying, despondent age, there came a tall, young Galilean prophet with beautiful, reassuring words. He gave a new value to morality. He lifted ethics to the height of the

Sermon on the Mount. He had a message for common men.

"Irresistible," thought Theophilus as he listened to Paul, who talked like an angel. "I must hear more of this matter."

He wrote a long letter to his friend, Doctor Luke, and stated his case: Was Jesus real? Or was he another invention? If real, who was he, and how far ought a man to follow his teaching?

Luke read the letter and answered it. He answered it according to his experience and understanding. He answered it in terms of the age to which he and Theophilus belonged.

This answer is called the Third Gospel. It is regarded as the most beautiful literary composition in the Bible, because it bears the stamp of a true artist. The artistic element in the story is important, witnessing to the validity of the imagination in writing about Jesus. It proves that the artistic manner is the best way to preach the gospel. The essence of Jesus' life is there—his thought, his character—coming through to us by means of fragments of poetry, old songs, and rare conceits.

Luke also was free in his arrangement of materials. He had a plan and developed his sequence accordingly, filling in the historical

chinks with the gold of fancy. The important thing before him was to help Theophilus see, understand, love, and follow Jesus.

Luke began like this:

"Inasmuch as a number of writers have essayed to draw up a narrative of the established facts in our religion exactly as these have been handed down to us by the original eyewitnesses who were in the service of the Gospel Message, and inasmuch as I have gone carefully over them all myself from the very beginning, I have decided, O Theophilus, to write them out in order for your excellency, to let you know the solid truth of what you have been taught."

In the spirit of Doctor Luke, my Gospel has been written to my friend Theophilus. He is on every campus, is in every fraternity of North America.

How well he is named—God-Lover! He loves the good, the beautiful, and the true. He is moral because mental and spiritual cleanness delight him. He keeps his brave young body from all defilement, for, like Rupert Brooke, he longs for the fellowship of his son and would be worthy of fathering him.

And yet he is in rebellion against religion as he has received it. The prayers of the college service mean nothing to him. He does not feel

like vile earth, or a miserable sinner. He is healthy, decent, and honorable. Why should he say his prayers in such a jumble of archaic words as these, "Provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us"? . . . He looks up at the pale, tortured body of a man on a cross, pictured by bits of colored glass above the chapel altar, and wonders if Jesus looked like that!

Theophilus, Jesus did not look like that. He was a young athlete from the hills of Galilee. He was every inch a man who lived up to his ideals and suffered for them! Come, let us reason together about him. I have done my best to present him to you as I have seen him throughout thirty years of preaching.

I believe in God because I believe in man; and God is real to me when I touch Jesus of Nazareth. He did not work miracles, if by that word you mean magic. So I have left out the miraculous element in the story. Psycho-therapy is not magic, it is science, however dimly apprehended. It is my belief that Jesus developed wonderful powers, and used them, because he found God.

We are no longer in the universe of Lucretius or of Russell. We are in one of the many rooms of a "house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens," the house of the Father of Jesus and of us. The soul is no more a speculation; it is man's true self, begotten in the image of God and as divine. Life ceases to be a short journey from cradle to grave; it becomes a highroad along the infinite universe, with planets for mile-stones and constellations for goals.

What was the secret of Jesus' ease with God?

Attempts to answer this question have delayed the hour of his kingdom on earth by dividing his friends in an unbroken controversy. Each century has had its say, and passed on, only to embarrass the centuries that followed by what it said . . . What rage of councils! . . . What persecutions! . . . What dividing of families! . . . What laughter of hell! . . . We are still at it, avoiding the issue with a smoke-screen of words, afraid to look levelly at him who pleads:

"Why are you upset? Why do doubts invade your mind? Look at my hands and feet. . . . It is I! . . . Feel me and see; a ghost has not flesh and bones as you see I have."

Let us take him at his words. Let us look at his hands and feet.

His hands? They worked at a carpenter's

bench—human hands, loving tools and the touch of wood!

His feet? They went to and fro on errands of love—dancing, happy feet on which he comes across the centuries to the shut door of our obstinate hearts!

Jesus is still a man. He is not a ghost. He is not dead. He comes down all the ways of the world. He is browned by the sun. His hair has its same red gold. His beard crisps and curls below his laughing, musical lips. He is and always will be the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Because he is still a man and not a ghost, we answer that question to-day with a frankness that he always loved. We say: This is the secret of Jesus' ease with God—he climbed to Him by the gradual ascent of the experiences of his boyhood and youth. That is the only road which leads to God. By that road we also are climbing. We know it, share it with him; and sharing it with him, find it no difficult task to trace his steps. We must do to-day what other ages have failed to do: Write the Gospel of those early years in our own tongue, according to our understanding.

Jesus' life was not different from ours. Man is the same through the centuries of his life on

this planet. Customs, times, tongues, are superficial. Underneath lie always the human heart and the human soul.

Jesus, like all great men, was the focal point of his age. His greatness is the measure of the fulness of his power to reveal the longings, the aspirations, the dreams of his country. He belonged to an era of saints. Witness his parents; witness Nahor, Simeon, Anna; and, later, that "glorious band, the chosen few," who in afterdays "climbed the steep ascent of heaven," eager to be of his company.

The nineteenth century was the era of scientific thought; it gave us Darwin. The fifteenth century was the era of discovery; it gave us Columbus. The first century was the era of prayer; it gave us Jesus and the apostles.

This is the secret of Jesus' early ease with God: He gathered in himself the passionate tears, the strong crying and loneliness of the soul for God, peculiar to an age that hungered and thirsted for His kingdom. Jesus is the spirit of the first century—the century of a people who waited bravely through a time of great darkness, longing for the light.

From the hour of his awakening in the temple, Jesus went up by the little ascents of daily life in Nazareth: a good carpenter, a scholar of

parts, a sturdy, healthy boy, full of moods—moods of laughter, anger, and tears.

Because of the singular purity of his heart, the trained simplicity and directness of his mind, the robustness of his body, disciplined and directed by wholesome food, work, and play, Jesus met with ease the crisis of adolescence, lifting up the glorious vitality of his manhood to that love which might one day be his to share with a woman. He belonged to a race that set great store by children, describing him a happy man whose quiver was full of them. He was educated in a literature that abounded in love-stories. He had an Oriental's pride of family, and looked without evasion upon the day when his father's name would be handed on by him to posterity through his children. . . . His children? Never did a man's heart ache as the heart of Jesus ached for children. Witness his way with them, as he went through Galilee and Judea, preaching his gospel, saying, "Let the children come to me, do not stop them: the Realm of God belongs to such as these. I tell you truly, whoever will not submit to the Reign of God like a child will never get into it at all."

Jesus has walked down the years with all lovers. He understands those who for their

work's sake have taken the lonely road of celibacy—not because there is virtue in it, but because there is virtue in obedience to that self-denial which crowns all men and women who yield their bodies to dangerous causes precluding the tender relationship of wedded love; or who, for sweet loyalty to the helpless, sanctify themselves to the long years of glad toil and utter giving. Jesus took that lonely road, but not without a struggle, not without a sacrifice of his ardent youth. He won his purity for our sakes. He won it by lifting up his body to the level of his soul. He won it through a chivalry that challenges our manhood and womanhood with his eternal word:

> "Blessed are the pure in heart!
> They shall see God."

Theophilus, Jesus belongs to us. He is of our order. Among the hills of Galilee, he dreamed of our day, and by the lake of Gennesaret, he called to us. He was a poet of the highest genius and the most surpassing humanitarian tenderness. If men tell you that he never lived, laugh at them and turn away. If others tell you that it is impossible to find him because of myth and legend, answer, "He is worth finding, for he was a man after my heart."

If I were a soldier, I should find Alexander and Cæsar. If I were a statesman, I should discover Solon, Moses, Pericles. If I were a poet, I should tap at the door of Homer's house, or try to "see Shelley plain."

Though I may be none of these, I am a lover of men, women, and children. I love trees, mountains, round-topped hills, brooks, rivers, lakes, and seas. I love the sky. I love the wings of the wind. I love the smell of the earth and the exhalations of the ocean. I love all things. But, above them, I love this bewildering, wonderful humanity which I share with you. I would rather be a good friend than take Quebec or any other city. I would rather hear the common talk of people than listen to the "young-eyed cherubim."

Because I am like that, I hold that Jesus is the most important man this planet has produced. He is the leader of lovers. He is the companion of the highway of an ultimate Brotherhood of Man. Because you are a lover like that, I offer you Jesus, O Theophilus!

ROBERT NORWOOD.

"Tedholm,"
Hubbards, Nova Scotia,
August, 1929.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the courtesy of Mr. George H. Doran for permission to use a lyric from *The Man of Kerioth* and the quotations from Dr. Moffatt's translation of the Old and New Testaments.

THE MAN WHO DARED TO BE GOD

CHAPTER I

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR

He was born, they say, on a winter's night. He was born in a stable. His father was a poor man, working at the carpenter's trade.

Joseph, his father, and Mary, his mother, had arrived at Bethlehem on the night of his birth. They had come from Nazareth at Cæsar's command to be registered for the imperial tax in the town of Joseph's clan. Because the town was crowded, and Joseph was poor, they slept that night in a stable.

Here, among the cattle, and lying on the sweet-smelling straw, Mary gave birth to a son. When the weariness of her great giving was past, she silenced his crying on her breast. The reward of all mothers was in her heart as she felt the aimless dabbling of his hands and the soft, wet warmth of his mouth. In her eyes was the light of Israel's hope. That light had shone in the eyes of three centuries of mothers, suckling their first-born and praying that their man-child might be Messiah. So, as mothers pray and babies are born, Messiahs come.

Bethlehem was overcrowded and noisy with many visitors. They had come from all parts of Palestine. They had come rebelliously, muttering curses against Augustus and his horde of census-takers—men who had sold themselves to a power that had insulted Israel and its God by the imposition of a tax which threatened the little homes with hunger and the bitterness of tears. Times had been hard enough, ever since the war that laid waste the fields and vineyards, burned cottage and croft, scattered the cattle, maimed and killed the men, ravished and ruined the women, in order to give to Cæsar the fair land which God had promised to Moses. And now, added to the horror of war, the slow recovery from its wounds, had come this last iniquity of Cæsar—the tax!

Into this world of anger, tears, and dread, Mary's baby was born. He was born to the sound of the lamentations of women and the curses of broken-hearted, overburdened men. He was born under the shadow of fear. If the night of his birth was cold, it was not so cold as the freezing dread of his people's humiliation.

Among those who came to Bethlehem for the census were a company of shepherds from the hills of Judea. They were strong, silent, good men, believing in God and certain of His

care for His children. They were devout, given to prayer, using the lonely hours for meditation; and when night came and they were gathered about the cheerful hillside fire, they talked much about Israel and the coming of Messiah. They had no doubts. Their life was clean, simple, and straight. Doubts come only to those who run away from life; and these men met life fairly, gladly, trustingly. They had a thing to do—the care of the sheep—an unremitting task, for the uplands were sparse of food and wolves lurked among the boulders.

These men also found the stable. To them it was a holy place. They believed that all mothers are miracles of God, that any baby is a possible Messiah, since babies come to earth by the will and act of God. So they knelt before the manger and prayed for him, and for his mother and his father. As they prayed, the light of the stars was on the stable, shining through its rough doorway. They prayed that the baby might be the Anointed One. The world was tired of kings and captains, of fat-faced, leering profiteers who defrauded the meek and lowly. They prayed that the baby might be Immanuel—a beautiful word which a long-dead poet had given to Messiah, describing his belief in man's divinity, in man's inbred

Godhood one day to be released and revealed in the Redeemer of the world.

Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, believed in angels. They were not bothered as we are by the too little learning that has made us foolishly wise. They lived with the sky that curved above their land of mountains, brooks, rivers, lakes, and sea. A cluster of grapes, a handful of dates or figs, an ear of corn, was a gift of God. He made all things in their season. To every seed, shrub, tree, and vine, He gave a guarding angel, as He gave them to men.The shepherds, Mary, and Joseph were used to angels—angels who sang, above the stable where the baby lay in a manger, the song of the mothers of Israel:

"Glory to God in high heaven,
Peace on earth to good people."

But more than shepherds came to the stable for shelter that night. There came three holy men travelling through the world in search of wisdom. The world of that time was familiar with such holy men. They were wayfarers of the earth, claiming no place as their own. They believed that this earth belongs to God and that all His children should be at home on it. They were vowed to poverty, chastity, and good works. Leading a roving life and living gladly

on the bounty of their occasional hosts, they were free from the intolerance of creeds and the fettering of caste or country. But they were not idle men. Wherever they went they served. They could plough, mend an ox yoke, heal a wound, help at the gathering of grapes and the making of wine, turn the winch of an olive press, swing the sickle among the golden wheat, barley or rye, and gather the crops into the barns. They were minstrels of many songs; when they sang, the village or townspeople gathered to hear them.

These men also knelt before the baby of Bethlehem, praying as the shepherds had prayed. Perhaps they saw more than Joseph and Mary could see, for it is said that each, before departing, left in the manger a significant gift. One took from his finger a scarab ring; one drew from the soft folds of his white turban a small, oval, ivory box of incense; and one sought for and found in the scarlet knot of his girdle an alabaster flask of myrrh used for the anointing of wounds.

Is it any wonder that the pure heart of Mary sang a song of joy after all these happenings? One of the many poets who turned his pen to the telling of her story has said that she hid all these things in her heart; that, because mothers

are mothers, the hope grew in her that through her son God would keep faith with the women of Israel.

Before Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, they did two things. Both these things were important.

The first, concerning the naming of their child, was in fulfilment of an ancient law. On the eighth day after the child's birth, he was circumcised in the synagogue of Bethlehem. Mary longed to take him from the rabbi and soothe his poor, little, hurt body against her heart. But the habit of her religion resisted the still older habit of her tender kind, and she found relief from her mother-agony in the crooning of words through the chanted ritual of his consecration. How she was comforted when at last the rite was ended and the rabbi laid him in her waiting arms! He was now an Israelite, a child of the holy Covenant, a son of God, with a name that is above every other name in heaven or on earth—Jesus!

The second important thing that Joseph and Mary did, before they returned to Nazareth from Bethlehem, was to visit the great city and present their first-born to God in His temple. Jerusalem was not far away, and Mary was

eager to honor her baby with the priestly blessing. If Jesus was to be Messiah, she would see to it that her world should at once know about her baby. She was not sure that he was Messiah, but she believed that the time of his coming was at hand. She also believed that God needed Messiah and, needing him, waited for a mother who would yield Him her first-born.

The name which Mary gave to her son reveals her heart. She, above all other women of her country and time, yearned to give God a man fit for His choice. From her girlhood she had prayed for this honor. Resolutely she had set herself apart in virgin purity, regarding her body as the handmaid of God. By some law of fulfilment, either of heredity or of environment or of education, she had entered into the state of sainthood before she knew her husband, and was ready for the holy mystery of conception from the day of her adolescence. Behind the beautiful folk-songs which haunted the poets of the first century, songs that have thrilled centuries of devout hearts with their holy rapture, is a virgin's prayer repeated at all times when she bowed before her God:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it unto me according to thy word."

As they entered the temple, Mary heard the sound of trumpets and the hymns of the great choir. The baby was in her arms. She walked to the music of the trumpets and hymns. She lifted her head proudly, believing that the angels of God were greeting her child. . . . All this glory was for him. . . . For him had these pavements of stone, these pillars, arches, and roofs of marble, ivory, and gold, this splendor of many-colored curtains of linen and silk, this fragrance of incense, waited in patience through the years against the hour of his coming. She knew the holy writings by heart, touching a rosary of words as she carried her child from court to court, until she stood before a priest glittering in his vestments.

These are some of the words that she touched, words held by the silver cord of memory and strung through the years by her thoughts:

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. . . . Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. . . . The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

Because the census had gathered many people together at Bethlehem, so near to Jerusalem, not a few of Joseph's clan were in the temple that day when he and Mary presented Jesus. Theirs was not the only child brought to the priest at that hour, and for that reason, the ancient rite which derived from a Mosaic tradition concerning the first man-child, was being observed with a peculiar dignity. Here at least was balm for the wounded hearts of Israel. Though the insolence of Cæsar had imposed the tax, they were not to forget that God was the Lord of hosts. In His time He would restore the kingdom to Israel, and His time was always near: a thousand years in His sight were as yesterday! . . . The heavier the hand of Cæsar, the nearer the hand of God. . . . These thoughts gave a deeper meaning to the ritual of the offering of the first-born that day in the temple when Mary, among many mothers, brought her child.

Mary was a mystic. She had a creative imagination. It was creative because she believed in God. To believe in God, one must have a pure heart, and a heart is pure in proportion to the singularity of its love. Mary's love was singular. From her nascent girlhood she overflowed with a free enthusiasm for all beauty. She knew

her native flowers and talked to them. She used to put her arms about the trees and tell them her secrets. The doves of Nazareth came at her call, with the drumming of white and gun-metal wings, making a halo of little flames above her head, before they settled on her shoulders or pecked at her sandals. She talked to stones, and sang with running water. She was at home on a hill, and sometimes from a summit would lie looking up at the clouds.

Her mother, Anna, was an understanding woman. It is not often that genius is fathered or mothered by understanding. Nothing is known about Mary's father. Is it fair to conjecture that he was probably unimportant? But Anna stood forth among the good neighbors of Nazareth as a woman of common sense, blessed with a lovely girl, a bit queer in her talk at times, but gentle and sweet in all her ways.

On that day when Mary entered the temple with her baby, every sight and sound of her moment conspired to make her happy.

In the group of friends from Galilee who had gathered to join with her in the rite of dedication was an old man. His name was Simeon. He had known Mary from her babyhood, had taught her to sing the lyrics of David to the accompaniment of a little harp which he

had made for her. Simeon was a minstrel and a master of his craft. When he played the harp, his long, dancing fingers made a sound like the wind stirring the grape-vines hanging from their stakes, or like the trickle of water from the brimming buckets coming up from a well, or like the whisper of sickles flashing a circle of fire through the tall, golden wheat.

Simeon took Mary's child from the vested priest and sang a song of his own making. His voice was the wonder of Galilee. It ranged from the roar of surf to the climbing, far-away tones sweeping up through the cedars of snow-capped Lebanon.

This was the song of Simeon, and as he sang it, the gentle heart of Mary was glad:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
Depart in peace,
According to thy word:
For mine eyes have seen
Thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared
Before the face of all people;
A light to lighten the Gentiles,
And the glory
Of thy people Israel."

And then there was Anna, the daughter of Phanuel—very old and very wise. She was Mary's friend, coming often to Anna's house.

Mary's mother was named after her. Anna also had the gift of minstrelsy; but the years had bowed her body and had changed the once-rich contralto to a gentle, soft piping as of a reedy flute. Old Anna had the gift of second sight. Her deep-set, half-shut eyes—eyes with the cold, blue hardness of glacial ice—could pierce through the covered rolls of human thoughts and read what was written there.

Anna knew Mary's heart. She loved her, had taught her the wisdom of womanhood through those years that ended in her betrothal and marriage to Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. Knowing the virgin heart of Mary, Anna believed that the fruit of Mary's womb was blessed above women. She knew that God keeps faith with mothers, even as He wants mothers to keep faith with Him. She knew also that Messiah could not come except through a mother like Mary. Knowing this, she took Mary's child from Simeon's arms and, in a sweet tremolo of rapture, sang:

"The bud of the rose
Blooms on the stem
Planted by Judah.
Its beauty and breath
Will hallow the earth,
Till the glory of God
Is revealed to the world!"

There were other songs that day in the temple, and other babies were blessed; but among the mothers, none was so proud, so elated, as Mary. She stood there in her tall, slender beauty, holding Jesus to her heart—the spirit of the highland mother—habited in a peasant's rough, woollen mantle, woven at her loom in Nazareth, and ridged with many colors. Her black hair was braided and coiled above her proud and royal head. Her scarlet lips were parted by the escape of the last word of her whispered secret to the ages, as her glorious eyes flashed the sign to all mothers:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced
In God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded
The low estate of his handmaiden:
Behold, from henceforth
All generations
Shall call me blessed."

CHAPTER II

"LITTLE BOY JESUS"

JESUS was born at the time of year when the sap begins to stir in trees, when the branches are full of folded hands soon to be opened to the sun. Between the months of November and April, the white clouds roll up from the Mediterranean and the rain falls over Palestine. The dry land changes from yellow to brown, and the sower walks down the field flinging the corn among the furrows made by the thrusting ploughshare.

We of the Northland think of Jesus as a child of the snow. He was not. He was a child of nest-building, of corn-sowing, of bud-bursting, of the intervals of rain and blue sky and the smell of wet, brown earth. He came with the song of mating birds, the song of love, and the rapture of birth.

On her return to Nazareth, Mary went through the laughter of spring, through the garden-time of the world. She rode on an ass, holding her baby in the folds of her cloak. Joseph walked at her side, his left hand on the bridle rein, his right clasped about the crook of a staff.

Joseph was a notable man. He was tall and sturdy. The hair of his head and of his full beard was a golden brown. His eyes were deep-set and blue. Sometimes those eyes were veiled with the mist of dreams, sometimes they flashed with a fire of sudden anger, and sometimes they twinkled and shone with fun. He was a man of moods. His voice was deep. He had a habit of talking into his beard, that tumbled from an obstinate chin, halfway down his broad breast. His hands were square—the hands of a craftsman—but they were nervous and sensitive. Through years of carpentering they had been trained to think, gripping the handle of a chisel, an axe, a saw, a plane, or caressing the wood that grew into shape in his workshop at Nazareth.

Joseph, according to the tale that the poets loved to tell after their personal mood and fashion, was directly descended from David, one-time king of Israel. Of this fact Joseph was proud. There were times when his deep voice rumbled angry words, thinking of his people and their wrongs; and there were times when his blue eyes were caverns of tears, remembering David and the glory of his reign. Locked up in his heart was the hope that one day God would give him a son worthy of re-

suming David's crown and of breaking with his royal hands the galling yoke of Rome beneath which the necks of his people bowed.

Now that son was his. . . . He was taking him and his mother home. He had shared Mary's joy with the shepherds and the holy men who had come to the stable at Bethlehem, as he had shared her happiness in the temple when the trumpets blared, the Levites sang, and Simeon and Anna prophesied. . . . Folded in his mother's cloak lay the Crown Prince of Israel!

It was an hour for dreams and visions. The world was awake after the long sleep of the dry season. The sun no longer hurled its flaming spears out of the sky against the land. The sun was kind, reaching through the white clouds with a host of hands to sprout the seeds in their furrows and to open the buds on the branches and vines.

Rightly had he and Mary named their firstborn Jesus—*one who saves*. That name was the measure of their hope, the description of their hearts' desire, the signature of their prayer that they might be found worthy to give to Israel a redeemer and a king.

Many miles were travelled before this holy family came at length to Nazareth. Their road

wound through the valley of Jordan, past villages where they found shelter at night; past vineyards, fields, and farmers' homes; past the river flowing down from the lake of Gennesaret. As they went, Joseph talked, Mary sang, and Jesus sometimes cried, as babies cry, and sometimes gurgled and cooed and laughed, as babies also do.

As they went on their homeward way, the heralds of spring ran before them, touching the buds on the branches till they opened green hands of welcome to Jesus. The flowers came to life and filled the land with color that carpeted the roadside with many patterns. Here were acres of anemones, red, pink, purple, and white; acres of bachelor's buttons, equal to the anemones in variety of hue; acres of poppies staining the hill-slopes with gorgeous and daring dyes. These were the lovelier for the bold, ridged, rocky hills with green terraces of grapevines climbing their stakes, whose supporting arms filled the country with countless little crosses in ordered rows.

At last they came in sight of Nazareth, nestling in a valley north of the plain of Esdraelon. As they climbed the road that wound upward to their home village, Mary and Joseph looked with awe on Mount Tabor, lifting its rounded

bulk eastward of Nazareth. Tabor seemed to Mary like a huge topaz, yellow and flaming with red ridges, set in a circle of silver where the river Jordan curved and flashed under the radiance of the sun. Her heart was happy. She was almost at the door of that little home where her child would increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

But long before they entered Nazareth, word of their coming had preceded them. Joseph was popular among the villagers. He was more than a good carpenter; he was a man of kindly deeds and wise counsel. His shop was the resort of those who loved talk. Old and young men came when they could, lounging on the fragrant pine and cedar shavings, awaiting their turn to have him mend a broken plough or make and fit a handle to a hoe. Religion, politics, local gossip—ofttimes a song from Simeon—filled the intervals of sound made by Joseph's mallet on chisel, plane on board, saw snarling its way through a beam.

And all Nazareth loved Mary. Her beauty was the pride of the village. Her laughter was sweeter than the song of Simeon. Her marriage to Joseph was a day to be remembered. The sky was never so blue above Tabor, the wind was never so cool and soft among the

vineyards, as on her bridal morning. What abundance of cakes, candies, and wine was served at the table where Joseph and Mary reclined. What music and dancing and laughter! What stories were told by the old men—stories of other days when Rome was a rude cluster of mud hovels on the Tiber, and David was winning the heart of Michal, with his hand on the harp and his voice like the running of water over pebbles when he selected one for the sling that killed Goliath! And through the voices of the old men at their stories were heard the shy giggles of maids with their lovers, dreaming of their marriage feast and envious of the glittering garments and silver bracelets of the bride.

All this was a year ago, and here were Joseph and Mary returning to Nazareth with their baby! Word of his birth had reached Nazareth, brought thither by those who had not visited Jerusalem, and later by Simeon himself, who came back eagerly to his people, full of new songs, and boasting of the wonderful boy with his father's blue eyes, whom he had held in his arms at the service of dedication.

Nazareth had waited through the days for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Every morning since

the return of Simeon, Anna had climbed the stairs of an old watch-tower and had gazed across the battle-field of Esdraelon. . . . She must be the first to see, the first to cry the news of her daughter's coming.

At last the waiting mother was gladdened by the sight of her beloved. Over the hill came the unmistakable bulk of Joseph's body, striding at the bridle of an ass, his turbaned head lifted proudly to the tower, as though he saw Anna and was calling:

"I am come, my mother,
With the rose of Sharon
And the bud of its beauty
Sprouting on its stem!"

One shrill cry of an old woman's voice stirred the village, and then there was laughter with the sound of many feet.

Again the heart of Mary was proud. Her world had conspired to greet her baby with joy. The stable of his birth, the synagogue of his initiation, the temple of his dedication, the homeward road that wound through the glamor of spring, this shout of welcome from Nazareth, were intimate words of her God saying of her son:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. I will give unto him the

throne of his father, David. He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Joseph's house had been built by him for Mary. It was, like all the other houses in Nazareth, square and squat, but it had a walled garden from which a stone stair climbed to a second story, used for bedrooms, and set within a parapet enclosing a pavement of rush-covered slates. It was pleasant to sit here in the cool of the day and look on the mountains of Galilee, changing from their gorgeous red and yellow arabesques to the purple of grapes when they hang heavy for the picking.

He had chosen for the site of his house a plot of ground near a spring which still bubbles in Nazareth. In Joseph's day this spring was the social centre of Nazareth. Thither came the mothers and maids at the dawn and the twilight to fill their water jars. At such times there was much gossiping, and at twilight there was often heard the song of a lover playing a harp, while the chorus would be taken up by youths and maidens coming and going, or lingering near the fountain as the stars crept down over Tabor and roofed Nazareth with an arch of amethyst and gold.

Joseph's workshop faced the street. It was a deep room with a wide arch. Here he set up his carpenter's bench, his cooper's saddle, and hung his tools conveniently above the bench. There was space here for a man to work, to keep his lumber dry on heavy cedar beams high above his head but near enough to be reached by square, strong, sensitive hands that loved the feeling of wood as a harpist loves the feeling of the strings of his harp.

Behind the shop was a little stable for the ass and the cow, and above it, a cote of lattice-work for Mary's doves.

Joseph's house was his joy and worthy of the master-carpenter of Nazareth, a man of royal lineage, proud of his descent from David, a patriot with a flaming soul and brave, blue, prophetic eyes. He had laid every stone of that house with love and had fashioned every beam and board with song.

To this house Joseph and Mary brought Jesus, followed by the neighbors who had greeted them with songs and words of welcome and clapping of hands. Nor was that welcome lacking in the good cheer of food provided by Anna and her friends. A fire had been kindled in the oven, and bread was now baking for the simple feast of the home-coming. There was a

jar of wine ready for the cups, and platters of raisins covered the low tables. Simeon was on hand with his harp and new songs.

Again did miracles happen to Mary. How God had honored her baby! The world—her world—was gathered to see, honor and praise him. Her heart was the happiest in Nazareth. She was home with her first-born—her king with the blue eyes and the softest of russet-gold hair. As she entered their home, she held him up that he might look through the open door into her garden, where the doves settled and cooed and where the flowers poured out their odors to him. . . . And Jesus opened his arms to them, making little sounds like the doves in the garden.

After the feasting, singing, and dancing, when the last guest had gone, Joseph, looking very mysterious, went out to his shop and returned with a cradle. He had made it before the journey to Bethlehem. He had made it secretly, always covering it with shavings when Mary entered the shop; giving it, when finished, to Simeon, lest Mary find it before her hour. That is why Simeon had hurried home and why he, too, looked so mysterious as he sang his new songs to welcome Mary and her baby. Of course, every gossip in Nazareth

knew about the cradle, but, for once in their lives, they kept a secret—Anna saw to that!

Mary sat on the stone ledge of her garden door, croodling her baby. She did not hear Joseph enter. She was lost in the sight and the smell of the flowers, the sound of the doves answering her little mother-words with their own eternal tenderness.

Joseph placed the cradle near the door so gently that Mary did not hear him. Then he stood away from it, gazing with a good carpenter's pride on the work of his hands and the love of his heart. It was a fine cradle. . . . Man had never made a better. . . . It was woven of osiers, sweet-smelling, and was well balanced on oaken rockers.

A shaving was tangled in his beard. His unturbaned head was maned like a lion's to his great, square shoulders. His eyes were now softly blue, but they twinkled with mischief, as he said in a deep, gentle rumble of words:

"Little mother, here is a better crib than a manger."

Mary turned her head and looked. No artist will ever catch the glory of her eyes when they saw the cradle. Centuries of motherhood gathered in that glory as she gazed and gazed. Swiftly she arose and ran to Joseph, kissing

him as he folded her and the baby in his bare arms.

"Ah, Joseph—my Joseph!" was all she could say. Then she broke from his embrace and laid Jesus in his cradle.

And the days were numbered into weeks, and the weeks into months, while Joseph whistled and sang, or talked to those who came to his shop, watching him at his work; while Mary baked and sewed and swept, stopping at times to bare her breasts for her baby's lusty appetite, or to sit with her foot on the rocker, singing the songs that lulled him to sleep.

As the days became weeks and the weeks became months, Jesus outgrew his baby clothes and one day, when Mary was not watching, he tumbled out of his cradle and began to crawl upon the floor. He was an eager, inquisitive baby—an elf of mischief and gurgling laughter—bound to put whatever he could find into his mouth and yelling mightily when Mary, for fear of his choking, slapped his roving, curious hands. She would swing him from the floor and dance about the room, or run into the garden where the doves whirled about him, till the tears dried on his round, fat cheeks. Then she would sing a song that Simeon had taught

her. As she sang, Jesus would sit among the doves and flowers with a far-away look in his round, wide-apart eyes.

This is the song of Simeon, the song that Mary used to sing, not knowing what it meant. But she knew in the after-years when he had gone away and her heart was crying for him in the garden of Joseph's house at Nazareth:

Little boy Jesus,
Tell what you are.
Moondrift and white cloud
Caught on a star!

Little boy Jesus,
What did you see?
Berries and blossoms
In Galilee!

Little boy Jesus,
Where did you go?
Down by the Jordan,
Watching it flow!

Little boy Jesus,
What is your will?
Wood for a cradle
On a green hill.

CHAPTER III

IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN

JESUS was a healthy boy. He slept in the cradle till it was too small for him. Then he lay at night in the upper room with Joseph and Mary, curled on a rug, his head pillowed by a cushion, his body covered with a soft woollen strip of his mother's weaving.

He was the first to awake. He would sit up and watch the stars framed by the low arch of the room, opening on the roof. He knew the stars long before he could speak. He loved the stars, but they made him lonely—lonely for something he had lost or had surrendered. It was some time before he was able to articulate this loneliness, but he felt it from the first; for he used to open his arms to the stars, making funny little sounds in his throat, sounds too soft for Mary to hear, sleeping at Joseph's side.

Though he was healthy, he paid with pain the price of his increase in stature. Teething time was hard for him. He had the robustness of Joseph's body, with the delicate, sensitive brain and nervous temperament of Mary. This temperament made him acutely responsive to

pain. At such times he was feverish and his wailings were piteous and incessant. Then Mary would walk with him under the stars, till the cool wind gentled him to sleep, as she crooned her songs, rocking him in her arms.

These things Jesus never forgot, and when the hours of his agony were upon him, he was soothed by a memory of stars and a cool wind, with the gentle, slow rocking of a mother's arms and the sweet crooning of her voice.

His first tooth was as wonderful as any other baby's, and there was great excitement over it in Joseph's house. Anna, who knew everything about babies, made more noise about it than Mary herself and was arrogant that morning among the women at the fountain, talking all the other mothers down, as she maintained that never before had a baby cut his first tooth with less trouble or sooner than her grandson.

There followed the time of toddling feet learning to walk, with Joseph coming in from the shop holding a curly, white pine-shaving to tempt Jesus, as he stood between Mary's knees at the other end of the room, to dare the long, long distance.

"Come, laddie," Joseph would say.

And Jesus would start toward him, a little fearful but crowing bravely as he balanced

himself, moved from Mary's knees, and stood alone, his brave, blue eyes on the shaving.

Life had many prizes for Jesus to win, and he was always brave against the perils of the way. That bravery was first revealed when, after many a tumble, he clutched with his left hand his father's homespun smock and with his right captured the shaving. Then it was that Joseph lifted him to his shoulders, shouting:

"Now, mannikin, the roads of all the world are yours; and the first leads to your daddy's shop."

Later, when her baking was done and the noonday meal was ready, Mary went softly to the carpenter's shop and found her son perched on a pile of shavings, watching Joseph make an ox yoke: and Joseph was talking to Jesus, and Jesus was talking to Joseph with the babblings of a little boy's pretense of his father's tongue.

Out of this incident a rivalry grew between Joseph and Mary. Joseph was sure that a man could handle a boy better than a woman, but Mary only smiled at his arguments and began to lead up the broken baby-sounds to the beginning of those words which will forever charm the world with their music and their wisdom.

In time Mary taught him the Hebrew alphabet, writing the picturesque letters of that

ancient tongue with a wedge of charcoal on a smooth bit of pine-board found in Joseph's shop. The mind of Jesus was quick to learn, strong to remember, eager to grasp. In the whiles of her teaching, Mary told those tales which every mother in Nazareth loved to tell.

She told Jesus about Abraham whom God called His friend; about Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel; about Joseph, the boy of daring dreams and great adventures; about Moses, who turned his back on a kingdom that he might be the saviour of his people; about David, the shepherd king, the poet and warrior, from whom both she and Joseph were descended. When Mary began to talk about David, the eyes of Jesus shone. One could see the pride of family in those eyes, as one could catch at Mary's intention, for she was a patriot, proud of her royal descent and holding her head high in spite of the humble life and the hard toil that forever faced her and Joseph.

When Jesus had mastered the alphabet, learning to read and to write, Mary taught him to say the Shema. It was the first of the sacred writings that he learned, and sounded the note of his message to the world. Its challenge is heard in all his teaching.

This is the Shema which Mary taught to

Jesus, repeating the words in a low, gentle voice, as though she were graving them on her son's heart:

"Hear, O Israel!
The Lord our God
Is one Lord.
Thou shalt love
The Lord thy God
With all thine heart,
With all thy soul,
With all thy might."

And Jesus, with his hands behind his back, his bare legs revealed below a short, blue, linen smock, his head now a tangle of yellow curls, his deep, searching, earnest blue eyes on the dark, radiant, tender eyes of Mary, answered in a voice that sounded like water running through reeds:

"Thou shalt love
The Lord thy God
With all thine heart,
With all thy soul,
With all thy might."

As the years went by, other children were born to Joseph and Mary—James, Joseph, Simeon, Judas, Mary, and Anna. The coming of these brothers and sisters made Jesus happy. Caring for them developed his innate tender-

ness. He soon learned to give up his toys and to make other little sacrifices which can be learned only by the child of a large family. He responded to the discipline of love and, as the other children grew, rivalled his mother in the telling of tales, the singing of songs, the invention of games.

One of these games was the old drama of life and love and death. They used to play it in the garden, but as they grew older staged it near the fountain. Jesus was master of ceremonies. His imagination was contagious and no boy in Nazareth disputed his leadership. The play began with a wedding, to the music of pipes, cymbals, and harps, Jesus taking the rôle of bridegroom, his favorite sister Mary that of the bride, while the others were called the children of the bridechamber. But the play ended with death. Tears and lamentations followed the gay songs of life and love. And there were times when Jesus became curiously silent, facing the mystery of death—death that came to the house of happiness, turning joy into sorrow. Then he would frown, shake his head, clench his fists, and, without a word, walk away from his playmates.

"Come back to us, Jesus," they would call.

But he would not answer. He was angry at

death. . . . Death was the great enemy. . . . Why could not a son of God kill that enemy? . . . When he grew up, he would try.

When he was five years old, Jesus went to school. The school was part of the local synagogue, conducted by a kind old man, Nahor the Khazzan. The pupils sat about him on a pavement and recited after their teacher selections from the Pentateuch. They made much noise, but they learned their lessons well. The sound of their voices was like chanting. Sometimes Nahor would say:

"Let us sing the Hallel."

Then down the narrow streets of the village, to the clear treble of children in song, would come words like these:

"Open to me the gates of righteousness
That I may go into them,
And give thanks unto the Lord.
This is the gate of the Lord,
The righteous shall enter into it.
I will thank thee, for thou hast heard me,
And art become my salvation.
The same stone which the builders refused
Is become the head-stone in the corner.
This is the Lord's doing,
And it is marvellous in our eyes."

Mary would stay the swiftly moving shuttle of her loom to listen. Joseph would look up

from the bench, resting the plane on the board, nodding his head at the sound of the children singing.

Jesus soon became Nahor's favorite. The boy's quick, certain memory was his teacher's pride.

"He'll make a rabbi yet," he said one day in the shop to Joseph.

But Joseph rubbed his hands together and affirmed that a boy like Jesus was too good to be wasted, declaring that he had plans of his own for his son.

"A rabbi! . . . We have enough of them. What this country needs is a warrior-king, a man with power to assemble the chosen from the four corners of the earth and smash the armies of Rome like so many flies!"

Joseph brought his right palm down with a smack on the bench, to show how it would be done.

But Nahor shook his head, laughed, and replied:

"No, no, good Joseph. Jesus has brains. Never did I teach a boy like him. It is amazing how he learns—what understanding! I tell you, he is too sharp for me with his questions. His tongue is like a dagger, and the wit of him is wonderful. If he keeps on the way he is going,

I'll send another Hillel to the temple to prove that a good thing can come out of Nazareth."

"Hillel! I tell you, he has in him the stuff of David. Have you heard him on the harp? Simeon swears that there never was such a harpist. He's more like a poet than a rabbi, with his wonderful songs—good battle-songs, too, with the call of trumpets and the marching of men. . . . He's not a Hillel. . . . He's a David!"

In this Joseph was right; for Jesus was a sturdy boy and full of patriot fire. As he grew older, the soldier quality in him was revealed in mimic battles with the boys of Nazareth. He soon forgot the games in the garden and at the fountain, loving the wooden sword which he had made in Joseph's shop, and mustering his chums into companies, armed like himself. These he drilled and disciplined. On holidays he led them forth into the fields beyond Nazareth, where they repeated the heroic deeds of David and Jonathan against the Philistines.

Until Jesus was twelve years old, this patriot side of him was strongest. But for all that, he was gentle and full of mischief, laughter, and charm. He was always a leader, always a patriot. He loved the God of Battles, and spoke brave words about the coming of the day when the sons of Israel would drive from the land

of their fathers the proud, insolent, invading army of Rome.

Jesus belonged to a world that ended beyond the Pillars of Hercules—fitly described in the Acts of the Apostles as a world of "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." This world was flat. It was covered with the sky. The sky was a translucent solid. Beneath it moved the sun, the moon, and the stars, in their order and by the power of angels obedient to God. God and the angels lived above the sky. This place was called heaven. Hell was the abode of devils, living under the earth in a bottomless gulf of eternal fire. At death, the souls of the good went to heaven and the souls of the bad went to hell.

Into this world Jesus came with his glorious soul, his extraordinary mind, his beautiful body. We cannot understand him if we take him out of his world. He belongs there, subject to its limitations, but always the most wonderful and inexplicable being in it. How he overcame these limitations by his goodness, wisdom, and un-

derstanding is still the marvel of the ages. To the end of time he will continue to puzzle his critics and those who try to explain him by denying that he ever lived. His secret is discoverable only by those who love him, obey him, and follow in his steps.

On the other hand, the friends of Jesus do him harm when they refuse to accept his human limitations. These limitations included the mental perceptions of his age—an age that was ignorant of our so-called laws of nature. To Nahor, natural phenomena were supernatural. The wind, the rain, the snow, the seasons with their birth and death of flora, were the result of spiritual acts. Some of these acts were good and some of them were bad, proving the existence of angels and devils in an invisible world of warfare.

Why this warfare, if God is King? Such a question—and we may be sure that Jesus raised it—was easily answered. God had made all things good; but Satan, or Lucifer, in his pride, rebelled, drawing into destruction a host of his fellow angels. These were the plotters and schemers who were never idle. They went about seeking whom they might devour. Hence the need of prayer, rituals, and other righteous acts. One day God would arise in His wrath and destroy these devils. But in the meanwhile

it behooved one to obey the Law and seek after wisdom.

So it was that Jesus prayed to God in Mary's garden, sitting among the flowers and doves. He believed mightily in God. He was not in any sense of the word pious about that belief. He believed in God as he believed in his father and mother. He believed in them because they were kind and good.

Here is the wonderful thing behind the tales which the poets have told about the birth and boyhood of Jesus: He was the child of a love that drew together a man and a woman and held them till all earthly relations were ended in death; the child of a love that was "very patient, very kind, knowing no jealousy, making no parade, giving itself no airs, never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful." In all our rightful praise of Jesus, let us not forget that he was begotten, cradled, and reared in the house of love.

Jesus had been taught to think of God as a King—a Warrior-King, with the stern business of battles on His mind. There was a fight to be fought for goodness. To that fight the King of heaven called the sons of men. It was a terrible fight, full of the danger of death—a fight that only the brave might dare. And Jesus was brave

from his boyhood. Oh, he was brave as he was good! His little heart was passionate for righteousness, the righteousness of God, as he had found it in his father and mother; in Simeon, the harpist; in Nahor, the Khazzan; in Anna, the gentle old mother of Mary; in the kindly, good neighbors of Nazareth. And in that passion of his heart was born a prayer which he afterward taught his disciples:

"Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation."

Nazareth was near the city of Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee. Here lived the tetrarch, Herod Antipas, in all the state of a Roman governor. One day Jesus went to Sepphoris and saw one of the kingdoms of the world. He was dazzled by its splendor, but he hated it. To him Sepphoris was the city of Satan with its foundations in hell. It was a city of unholy, terrible beauty—a beauty that derived from the heart's blood of his people. When he saw the fat-

jowled, gorgeous tetrarch sitting on the seat of judgment, he thought of a nasty, puffed, poisonous spider in the centre of a web of silver, and hated him. He gritted his teeth at him, thinking of the days of David. How his people had fallen, to bow before this evil man with the burning, odious eyes! Oh, that God would raise up a man like David to kill this leering devil on a throne!

And Jesus saw women unlike his mother and the mothers of Nazareth. They were painted and bangled and jewelled. They glittered and tinkled as they walked. Their eyes were bold and hard. Their scarlet mouths drew down at the corners. They shrilled and cackled like hens. They reeked with perfumes. Their fingernails were yellow with the stain of henna. The sight, sound, and smell of these women nauseated Jesus and he ran away from them, looking back as he ran.

That night, as he sat in Mary's garden playing with the doves, he prayed that God would let him cleanse his country from the iniquities of Sepphoris—cleanse it with a host of bannered armies marching to the sound of trumpets and the song of swords.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL DAYS IN NAZARETH

By the time he was twelve years old, Jesus had outstripped his schoolmates in the study of Moses and the prophets. When he came to the Mishna, hot debates arose between him and Nahor the Khazzan.

Nahor was a disciple of the great Hillel, whose interpretation of the Pentateuch established a method of evading many of its embarrassing statutes—embarrassing because they belonged to an age when the Israelites had been an agricultural people. In the book called Exodus, it was forbidden an Israelite to loan money to his neighbor at interest. The law reads:

"If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious."

Long before Hillel, this law was found to be impracticable; but, instead of facing it, the people of Jesus' day were lending money at interest. It was Hillel who found a way to evade this and other inconvenient ordinances of the Pentateuch. This method of evasion was called the Oral Law. Later it was called the Mishna.

But why an Oral Law? Why not a frank facing of an economic embarrassment by the forthright revision of the Pentateuch to bring its quaint agrarianism into harmony with a new economy? Because a fixed tradition of the infallibility of a Book had been established; and for that infallibility the people paid, as people always will pay, with an evasion.

Jesus was an enemy of all evasions. He was temperamentally honest. He was a child of the direct simplicity which characterized his father and mother. The house in Nazareth where Mary baked, swept, washed, sewed, wove, brought up her children; where Joseph worked for the wage that fed, clothed, and educated his family, was a house where truth, love, and sincerity were met and dwelt in friendship together.

Mary believed that the Bible was written by God. She believed this because, from a little girl, she had talked to God, and God had talked

to her. She heard Him at all times—heard Him in the prattle of her children, in the song of her loom, in the crackle of the fire that heated her oven for the baking, in the gentle plaint of the doves in her garden, as she had heard Him, before her betrothal and marriage and motherhood, when she danced, singing with the wind that poured down through the vineyards and farms on the gradual slopes of Mount Tabor. Because God had spoken to her heart, and still spoke, she knew that He had spoken to Moses and the prophets. God spoke always to the pure in heart.

This she taught to Jesus, saying to him:

"Laddie, God is your Father. He begot you through me in His likeness and image. You are the child of my dreams. Always be pure in heart, and you will see and hear Him. Search the scriptures, for they are His written word; and as you search them, remember that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

As Mary talked, Jesus stood before her and listened. He was now old enough to be taken to the temple at the next Passover. He was growing more and more like his father: broad-shouldered, sturdy, tall for his years, full of vital fire, magnetic, golden. His head was like

the head of a young lion; the broad, white brow sloped back a little to meet a billowing of russet-gold hair that fell to his already massive shoulders. The wholesome life that he led, the simple food which he ate with an abounding appetite, the boyish love of manly sports, the riot of song and laughter that was in him, all had part in the building of a body which was beautiful in its strength and symmetry of line.

When Nahor first taught him the dialectical evasions of Hillel, Jesus began to show forth the honest indignation which later kindled against the Pharisees. Again and again his sharp-edged wit drove the Khazzan into a corner, while his schoolmates, sitting in a circle about the old man, swayed backward and forward in delight at Jesus' understanding. They never forgot that low, sweet voice, climbing through the heat of argument to a crescendo of words defending the written Law. Among his listeners, Jesus was already finding a few of those disciples who were to gather about him in Galilee and, later, were to go into all the world, sounding his name as a bugle sounds reveille.

These arguments between Jesus and Nahor gave matter for gossip among the Nazarenes. Some thought Jesus a trifle pert.

"Children ought to be seen and not heard,"

was the text on which these critics stood. They agreed with Nahor that the Bible was a holy Book, to be interpreted only by those in authority. Any one could see that the Bible must be taken in faith—faith that followed where reason could not see. By degrees they came to regard Jesus with suspicion and disapproval, sowing the seed of that hatred which revealed itself in Nazareth's rejection of her own when at last he came thither at the dawn of his glory.

But many were for Jesus—proud of him, and sharing with Nahor the hope that one day the Sanhedrin would number him of their company. Nahor did his best to lead Jesus toward that goal and went about Nazareth boasting of his wonderful pupil:

"He'll make a rabbi, yet. Nothing can stop him. That boy's mind is like a bucket let down into a deep well and coming up full of water. I tell you, before his beard is full grown he will outrival Hillel."

Simeon used to chuckle, looking very wise as he fingered his harp.

"Tut, tut!" he would say. "No rabbi he, good Nahor. A prophet, I tell you—and more than a prophet. He is David reborn and come to save us from Roman thieves and Idumæan blackguards!"

Word of this talk came to Mary, but she only smiled above her shuttle flying between the hempen warp and making many patterns of color, as she sang:

"My King has made him a sedan
Of wood from Lebanon,
Silver the feet of it,
Golden the back of it,
Purple the seat of it,
Inlaid with ebony.
Maidens of Sion,
Come, look at my King,
With a crown from his mother."

In the carpenter shop Joseph rumbled into his beard gusty words about a warrior-king, glorious in armor, shouting a battle-cry to a bannered host that moved with thunder against the fearful and scattering cohorts of Cæsar.

Joseph and Mary never lost faith in the divine mission of their son, though they were careful to conceal it from him, waiting for the moment of his self-discovery. Quietly they brought him up, watching with a deepening joy, wonder, and awe the increase of their son. They loved him for his gentle way with his brothers and sisters, for the swift certainty of his obedience to their will, for his overflowing fun, mischief, and laughter, for his avid reactions to the call of play or study or work.

Joseph was content to let Mary and Nahor attend to Jesus' education, reserving to himself the right to train him in the craft of woodwork. Soon Jesus was the equal of Joseph in handling chisel, saw, adze, draw-knife, and plane. There were mighty and wonderful doings in that workshop, and often Mary caught the roaring laughter of Joseph in response to some quip of Jesus, who was full of mimicry and could imitate, at a moment's notice, any of the village folk, even Nahor, nodding at noontide and letting the drone of his words trail off into a sudden snore.

With all the wonder of his mind, of his goodness, and the growing beauty of his body, Jesus was not yet awakened to his great task. He was still a boy, obedient to the law of growth, and following instinctively the path to Godhood.

Jesus was a good carpenter. He loved to make things, and he had a masterly teacher in Joseph, who used to say to him:

"Son, whatever your hand finds to do is worthy of its skill. I hate slipshod work. There are carpenters and carpenters, but no one of them is fit to handle tools who does not love them and the sweet smell and kindly feel of wood. Heart behind the eye, eye behind the

hand, hand behind the tool, tool behind the wood, and wood behind the noble deed of man —there's a proverb for you!"

To these words Jesus always glowed, eager to imitate his father and to be about that father's business. He had a way of chuckling over his work, and sometimes would sing to the rhythm of the wooden mallet on the chisel that bit into the hard white ash of an ox yoke, adorned at the curling ends with a lily or a cluster of grapes. How tenderly his long, brown fingers—fingers like his mother's—caressed the curve that was fashioned to fit behind the horns of the waiting beast! No yoke of his ever galled the bowed, patient head of an ox, straining at the plough.

Early to work and early to bed was the manner of the life that Mary and Joseph taught Jesus. He loved to be up before sunrise, his fair young body naked in the garden as he splashed himself with gourds full of water from a great jar which stood in a vine-covered grotto set in the wall of the house. Then, as the sun came up over the mountain, he would stand, his body bare to its first glancing rays, and sing:

"The heavens proclaim God's splendor,
The sky speaks of his handiwork;
Day after day takes up the tale,

Night after night makes him known;
Their speech has never a word,
Not a sound for the ear,
And yet their message spreads
The wide world over,
Their meaning carries to earth's end.

"See, there is the sun's pavilion pitched!
He glows like a bridegroom
Leaving his chamber,
Exults like a hero
To run his course;
He sets out from one end of heaven,
And round he passes to the other,
Missing nothing with his heat!"

As Jesus sang, the doves would circle above his head, cooing; the swallows would rise twittering from the eaves of the stable; Deborah, the cow, would begin to moo gently for fodder; and Dagon, the ass, would lift up his voice in a blast like a trumpet. Then Jesus would laugh. He loved the old ass that had brought him, nearly twelve years ago, to Nazareth.

Jesus had a way with birds and animals, talking to them and listening for their replies. He called them little brothers and sisters. To every dove that flew above Mary's garden, to every swallow that nested under the eaves of the barn, Jesus gave a name—a name that de-

scribed each. He missed no flash of that personality which birds and animals reveal to those who love them. He was sure that his "little brothers and sisters" were children of God, made in His image and likeness. He was sure that they, too, were souls, with different manifestations. Because they were souls—flames of the central Fire—they had their speech, and wisdom was found in learning that speech.

All life taught Jesus. He had inherited Mary's faith in flowers, trees, birds, and animals. He loved a tree and, like his mother in her girlhood, never missed an opportunity to put his arms about one, talk, and listen to the whispered words that came down to his ear from the leaves, through the throbbing bark.

By this time the household was awake. A lot of curly heads, laughing and singing, tumbled down the stairs, into the garden while Jesus fed Deborah and Dagon, Mary made the fire in the oven, heating it for the breakfast cakes, and Joseph began hammering away in his workshop. Happy was that house in Nazareth, for in it gentleness and goodness lived with love and laughter. Only such a house could have given to the world a man whose quality of life and character was afterward described in an en-

chanting phrase of the apostle Paul, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As he neared his twelfth birthday, Jesus began to steal away from Nazareth whenever school was over for the day and there was no work for him in Joseph's shop. He loved the time of the setting sun, climbing a hill to watch its westerly fire burn above many-domed, glittering Sepphoris. A path, worn by many feet, led to the top of the hill. This path wound past a terraced vineyard, past an old wine-press, till it ended at a great rock which the wind and the rain had hollowed into a snug seat. Here Jesus would sit, his back against a boulder, staring down the valley.

His heart beat always the faster for the magic of the day's ending. The view from the rock was one to quicken a poet's heart. Nazareth still nestles among the hills, and its horizon is foliated by a vista of far-away mountains that open toward the Mediterranean. There is no lovelier view on this planet than that which the hill of Jesus gave to him from the rock above the vineyards and fields sloping down to the village.

At such a time, he was a boy of many moods —moods swifter than the flight of Mary's shuttle among the gray hempen threads. He

passed from ecstasy of vision to the passion of tears shed over Sepphoris. He always hated that insolent city, called it a harlot drunk with the blood of the righteous and staggering toward its damnation. It was then that the love of his land burned like the flame of pine knots held high in the hands of warriors marching through the night against the enemies of God. It was then that his love was manifested in the tears of a boy weeping and praying for the salvation of his people.

This was often the prayer of Jesus, his eyes lifted above the hills on fire with the glow of the setting sun:

"Give us, dear God, another David. Send him against Sepphoris with a bannered host of fighting men. Let me be that David. See how strong my body is. I will keep it holy and fit for Your use. My meat will be Your will, my drink Your purpose. Cleanse me from sin and keep me holy in all my ways. I ask nothing, dear God, for myself. I ask only that I may be found worthy to become the saviour of Israel."

It was a boy's prayer—the prayer of a heart that was hot with musing on the wrongs of his race. He had much to learn about the ways of God, but he had already formed the habit of easy communion with the Eternal. By this habit

he acquired that spiritual muscle which made him the athlete of God, strong to steady his thought on the mark of his heart's passion—the salvation of Israel—as a ploughman steadies the plough in the furrow by fixing his eyes on a sapling at the end of the field, driving the share straightly through the loam.

When the last crimson stain of sunset had faded from the sky, and the evening star began to twinkle over Nazareth, Jesus would leap from the rock and run down the winding path. He had returned to the way of mirth and swiftly moving feet, forsaking the way of tears and strange words struggling from his throat like bubbles in a seething pot.

CHAPTER V

DISILLUSIONMENT

HEROD'S temple was grander than its original, the temple of Solomon, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed and which was rebuilt some fifty years afterward. This restoration was crude, but it lasted for almost five centuries, to be torn down by the great Herod, who, about twenty years before Jesus was born, erected the then glorious sanctuary.

Herod's temple stood on a hilltop. It was a temple of domes, minarets, and marble walls, overlaid with gold. It glittered like a mountain lake that sheds its glory of light and color through the gorges and peaks of the solitary ranges. It palpitated under the thrusting lances of the noonday sun, and glimmered under the stars like a pyramid of snow.

This was the temple of Herod—the sanctuary of Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of David; the God of Elijah and Isaiah; the God of the most sweet minstrel of the Babylonian period, whose name is not known but who sang a mysterious song about a suffering Servant.

The temple proper rose above a ledge of rock that fronted it. Beneath this rock was a cave where an altar stood. The altar was surrounded by the Priests' Court. It was the altar where beasts and birds were slain and whereon parts of their bodies were consumed by the sacred fire. In the Priests' Court stood a bronze fountain from which water was drawn for the inevitable cleansing of the blood-stained pavement and the gory hands of the sacrificing priests.

Adjoining this court, marked by a wall not more than a foot and a half high, was the Court of Israel, open to all men of the Covenant. The Court of the Women was east of this and on a lower level. This court had a gallery, where the women of the Covenant might also watch the hallowed rite of the Burnt Offering. A high wall in the form of a great square, with four gates north, four south, and one east, encompassed these courts. There was, too, a gate that led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel.

Outside this wall, and lower on the holy hill, stood the Court of the Gentiles. It was a court of marble colonnades surrounding a noble pavement. Hither, in the course of time, came all the world. It was a place for gossip as well as

for worship: a place of laughter, and then silence, when some speaker of note stood in the pulpit, giving the usual gesture preliminary to a speech. It was a place where one could buy and sell—a place not unlike the lovely old arcades of Europe; a place of merchandise, where one could buy cattle or birds for the sacrifice, and exchange the money of Rome for the shekels of the sanctuary.

To this temple Joseph and Mary brought Jesus when he was twelve years old. It was toward the end of March, two years before the ignoble tetrarch of Judea, Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, was banished to southern Gaul by Augustus Cæsar. All through February of that year, Joseph and Mary had prepared for their pilgrimage with Jesus to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He was now old enough to be made a son of the Law. How he had waited for this event! His heart was eager for the moment of his final consecration. His imagination raced ahead of his feet. For several years he had longed to see the temple, to walk in its courts, to behold its glory, to hear the chanting of the Levitical choir, to see the High Priest robed in blue and white, mitred with jewels, and breasted with a mysterious plate of gold set with precious stones.

Jesus was not alone in this excitement. Several of his schoolmates were ready to be admitted to the Covenant of Israel. Nahor had done his best to make them worthy of that honor, and as the time of their going drew near, he became increasingly exacting.

"You never can tell," he said one day, "what you may be asked by the scribes. They are rigid in the matter of the Law, ever on the alert for ignorance, and always hopeful of finding rabbi material. I have done what I could for you boys. You must now do what you can for your school. One of your number is his teacher's joy. Of him I expect great things. I think you know who he is."

Here Nahor twinkled at them. The boys clapped their hands toward Jesus, who bowed his head in pride and in gratitude.

At last the morning for their departure came. It was a morning of stars and of soft, cool wind blowing over Nazareth: a morning that Jesus met early, splashing himself in the garden with water from the old earthen jar, too eager to do more than stand with wide-open arms in an act of silent dedication to God, before clothing himself and running to the stable, solicitous for Dagon who had so many miles to travel and must be well fed.

Jesus opened the door of the stable so gently that Dagon still dreamed of carrots as he lay on the straw which Jesus always spread for him. Even Deborah was asleep, and in her dreams walked through miles of clover, nodding her horns in ecstasy over its taste.

Jesus went softly to Dagon and pulled one of his long ears. Dagon opened his round, black eyes, as velvety as the plums that grow on the hills of Nazareth. He looked long and sleepily at Jesus; then his mouse-gray muzzle wrinkled with mischief as he bit gently at his friend's bare feet.

Jesus sat down on the straw and whispered into Dagon's ear words like these:

"Come, little brother; soon it will be sun-up and we shall be on our way to Jerusalem. You took me thither when I was a baby, and now I will lead you, bearing my sweet mother over the mountain trails. It's a long road, little brother, and here is good fodder for your grinding teeth and your round belly."

At the mention of fodder, Dagon stretched out his little flinty fore-hoofs, grunted, yawned, and stood up braying. The noise he made startled Deborah from her dreams. She gathered her hind feet together and arose with becoming dignity.

Long before the sun was up, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were on their way from Nazareth, in company with a host of neighbors journeying toward Jerusalem. Anna was left behind to care for the children of Joseph's house. Many were the kisses that Mary gave them before she left them at the fountain. Even the baby, James, dark like his mother and lately weaned, said good-bye, crowing lustily in his sister Mary's arms, waving dimpled, fat hands to his mother, who rode away on Dagon, looking back.

Mary's heart was always being thrust through by the sword of maternal care. It was not easy for her to leave the children behind; but the tears soon left her lovely dark eyes, looking at Jesus as he walked where Joseph once walked, the bridle-rein in his left hand, his right holding a shepherd's staff.

The road of the pilgrims wound through the plain of Esdraelon, passing the villages of Nain, Shunem, Jezreel, until it went by the slope of Gilboa and then down into the valley of the Jordan. This valley was rich with fields of grain, vineyards, and many flowers. Here, at the end of the first day, the pilgrims stopped for the night near a spring that bubbled with pure water.

It was a merry party that camped by the

spring. Life was full of sorrow, toil, and death, but God was near and the hour of His coming was at hand. At any moment He would arise to scatter His enemies—the Roman lords, the Idumæan politicians, the rude soldiers and their hard, cruel ways. Keeping the Passover was a pledge of faith in God; and each year, as the Galileans left their villages and towns to visit Jerusalem, they went with hope and a song in their hearts.

Tents were set up for the women. Jesus and his friends, Joseph and the other men, slept on the ground rolled up in their cloaks, content beneath the stars and lulled to dreams by the murmur of the spring. Dagon and the other asses were hobbled, munching the thistles and grass of the roadside until they, too, lay down, sleeping near their masters.

But Jesus was too excited to sleep. He was a day's march nearer Jerusalem. Soon he would stand in the courts of the temple to behold the fair beauty of God. The temple was God's house: He lived there. He lived in heaven, too, and on all the hills, for God was so wonderful that no one place could fully contain Him—not even heaven where the angels lived. Yes, God was everywhere—in heaven, on the hills, among the vines, in the furrows, where

the river flows, and where the mighty sea breaks in thunder on the curving shores; but He was especially present in the temple. Behind a veil was the mysterious Holy of Holies, empty of its glory, for the Ark of the Covenant was no longer there. Yet thither the high priest came once a year with the blood of the Atonement, pleading with God for the remission of the sins of His people. How patient was God! The veiled sanctuary witnessed to that patience. Jesus would not be allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, but he would be allowed to look at the great veil that concealed it from curious and unhallowed eyes. The veil would assure him that God's holiness still guarded the land. One day that veil would be drawn aside by Messiah's hand. . . . Then all the enemies of Israel would be consumed by the awful flame of God's too long pent-up anger.

These were some of Jesus' thoughts as he lay listening to the rippling song of the spring, looking up at the trailing white banner of the Milky Way, that floated above the hills among the torches of the armies of God, the everlasting stars. And thinking, Jesus also slept.

At the end of the fourth day, the pilgrims came to the eastern slope of Olivet and entered

the village of Bethany. Here Joseph, Mary, and Jesus separated from their friends to spend the night in Simon's house. Simon had three children, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, who were glad at Jesus' coming and listened eagerly to his wonderful stories of the adventures on the road from Nazareth to Bethany.

Even in his boyhood Jesus was a master of stories. He made words live. His memory held whatever he saw or heard. His imagination re-created what he remembered. His mimicry was perfect. He saw what he said and, seeing, gave reality to the words that fell from his lips like drops of water poured gently from a jug. As Jesus talked, Lazarus sprawled before him smiling up into his face, while Martha fidgeted and Mary sat with her head against Jesus' shoulders, a far-away look in her eyes.

Lazarus and Jesus were nearly of an age, but Jesus was sturdier and taller in build. Martha was a year older, and Mary a year younger. From the first, these four were friends; and when the morrow was come, Lazarus went up to Jerusalem with Jesus.

How happy the two boys were as they stood together on the Mount of Olives, looking across the valley at Jerusalem! The temple glittered with marble and gold. When Jesus

saw it, he knelt with his arms outspread to it, crying in a breaking voice:

"My Father's house! My Father's house!"

He did not see the old Asmonæan palace, or the stately home of Herod, or the pillared and glorious castle of Pilate, or the domed and terraced houses of the princes of his people, or the massive walls, towers, and gates of the city. He saw only the temple—the temple of God, the house of his Father. The sight of it filled him with a joy and a longing so deep that he wept, kneeling among the silver-green olive-trees, saying:

"My Father's house! My Father's house!"

From that moment, something that slept awoke in Jesus. Was it a memory? Or was it his genius that derived from the flaming heart of Joseph and the white passion in the soul of Mary?

And from that moment, Jesus rarely used the word "temple." He loved to call it "My Father's house!" With all his love of the hills, the trees, the fields, the vineyards, the dancing water of Gennesaret or the singing flow of the Jordan, Jesus felt the beauty of the temple, the intimate mystery of a synagogue. He knew that hills are altars and that every heart is the Holy of Holies. Yet to the end of his days, he

loved the place of assemblies and trembled to the sound of words praising God. And this was the reason: Jesus more than any man loved God.

God was never an abstraction to him, was never a word in a creed. God was the goodness of the universe coming through the goodness of men. Men were the measure of the infinite beauty of God's goodness. They measured that goodness in all their noble, if frustrated, efforts toward purity, love, courage, and kindness. Jesus believed that as men were good, they would see and reveal God: God wanted to fill men with His goodness but the human heart was too crowded to let Him fill it with that goodness. Believing this, he rejoiced whenever he saw God acknowledged and needed by men. And so when he first saw the temple of Jerusalem, glorious with its domes, minarets, marble and gold walls, its many-colored curtains above pavements in mosaic that burned under the morning sky like a sea of fire, he was shaken with a passion of tears, and cried, chokingly:

"My Father's house. . . ."

Then he heard his mother calling to him. She was already far down the hill with Joseph, riding Dagon and surrounded by her friends. She knew her son's heart, knew that he was

praying among the olive-trees. But she would have him at her side as she entered the gate of the city.

Jesus answered:

"I am coming, my mother."

He raced with Lazarus down the hill, and, taking the bridle-rein from Joseph, entered Jerusalem at his mother's side.

Jerusalem was crowded with visitors from all parts of the world. Its narrow streets echoed the songs of the pilgrims on their way to the temple. Beautiful old words rang down those streets, the very cobblestones thereof throbbing to their rhythms. It was a city of patriot memories. From afar, in strange lands, the sons and daughters of Israel knelt toward that city when they prayed. They were always homesick for Sion, and great was their joy when they were permitted to keep the Passover in the city of God.

Never, since the days of David, did such a patriot as the boy Jesus enter Jerusalem. He trembled to the pilgrim songs and joined in them as he marched at Dagon's bridle, keeping time with his staff that thudded on the cobblestones. On, on, he went, singing, exultant, expectant. The street wound upward. He

looked neither to the right nor to the left. His eyes awaited the glory of the temple gates.

But his mother's eyes were on him only, noting the graceful swing of his body, the movement of his broad, young shoulders, the undulation of his now red-gold hair tumbling from his white turban like a wind-blown sheaf of ripened barley.

Again her heart was happy, believing that the word of God was fulfilled in her son. She had kept her secret, even from him. Her soul was wise, knowing that if Jesus was Messiah, God would reveal it to him when the time came. She thought of the day when she had brought him, a baby, to the temple. She remembered all that had happened then—remembered her gladness, her rapture of vision, her sweet certainty that God had chosen her to mother the Messiah.

She was not now as she had been then. The years had taken their toll of her youthful body —so fruitful in the holy art of maternity. Her children were indeed like olive branches about her husband's table. To them she had given the bloom of her cheeks, the supple beauty of her body, the dancing feet of her girlhood. She had spent the most precious gifts of her sex upon her children. Her spending could be counted

in the lines of her face, the gradual graying of her hair, the perceptible stoop of her shoulders. But her mouth was sweeter and her eyes brighter with a love that gave without stint.

Type of the eternal mother, always virgin, always holy, she came at last to the gate of the temple, challenging God with her son.

"I have brought him hither to Thy house. Speak to him and make him aware. Behold, he is lovely in all his ways, pure in all his thoughts," she whispered as Jesus gathered her in his arms and lifted her to the ground outside the gate of the Court of the Gentiles.

Together they passed through, to stand silent among the multitude. Joseph, Simon, and the rest of the Galilean group were with them. But Jesus and Mary stood apart—he holding her hand, she still whispering words of prayer.

Then there grew in Jesus' eyes a look of perplexity. He could not reconcile what he saw with what he felt ought to be true of the temple. He saw and loved the multitude, swaying like the flowers of the field and as many-colored. He kindled to the grace of the arches and pillars of the colonnades. His heart melted at the sound of chanting beyond the wall of this outer court. He wanted to kneel with his mother and pray, before entering with her the

Court of the Women and passing with Joseph, Simon, and Lazarus through the Gate Beautiful into the Court of Israel, where he would be received by the priests as a son of the Law.

But he could not pray. He thought of Samuel's rebuke when he met Saul: "What is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?" For through the far-off chanting of the Levites and the silver tone of their trumpets, through the drumming of multitudinous feet on the broad, glittering pavement, came the doleful plaint of cattle and the pitiful lament of lambs calling to their answering mothers. He heard, too, the clinking of money, the sharp words of people bargaining, mingled with oaths and the senseless giggling of courtesans.

His heart was hot with anger. This was worse than Sepphoris. . . . The priests had betrayed his people, had insulted God. . . . Now he knew why Messiah delayed his coming. . . . How could he come to his Father's house? . . . The priests had made it a den of thieves!

CHAPTER VI

THE DISCIPLINE OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus was disappointed. It was the first of his many disappointments. Always, from the hour of his entering the temple to his dying agony, he drank of the bitter cup of disappointment.

Jesus' story will always be understood by the givers of beauty who know how sharp the birth-pangs of beauty are. Jesus' story will eternally comfort the idealists of the world. Sharing his vision of beauty, they will sound his challenge and enter all hells of ugliness in his name, certain of victory and ready to be wounded as he was wounded. Jesus is the champion and hero of saints—they who have found the flight of wings among the broken dreams of men.

Jesus was disappointed. He hated the confusion of sound in the Court of the Gentiles and, after his first recoil of disappointment, almost turned his back on the temple. But his mother's hand was in his and he had to think of her. He knew her heart as well as she knew his. Thinking of his mother always healed him

when hurt. A dim memory of stars in a curving sky, with the feel of a cool wind blowing, and the sound of her low, crooning words, always comforted him. It comforted him now. Her presence brought back the reality of God. . . . He was still in His temple, waiting for a son to help Him by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.

Sepphoris was Jesus' first challenge; the Court of the Gentiles was his second. He began to see "the joy that was set before him" and counted the cost of its winning. He would set his soul against the ugliness of the world that he might destroy it with the beauty of God.

Not long after his consecration to the full title, privileges and responsibilities of a son of the Law, Jesus began to seek out the rabbis and question them. He was determined to know why his Father's house was dishonored. Day after day he argued with them. They were amazed at his understanding. Many of the rabbis were good men, but they were fogged by theology and monotonous rituals. They clung too closely to the past. They were fettered by traditions.

They gathered about him, wagging their

turbaned heads, pulling at their beards, looking at him sometimes in anger and sometimes in laughter because of his sharp quips and easily turned sentences. He kept them busy with their rolls, hunting for scriptural authorities, often whispering among themselves in their amazement at his understanding.

"He is more learned than Hillel," one of them said.

"Yes," said another, a fine old man with a crackling voice, "his words are like goads, and his collected sayings are like nails driven home; they put the mind of one man into many a life."

Jesus grew more and more rapt. He forgot about Mary, Joseph, Lazarus, and the others. He was like a diver in a quiet pool, coming up to the surface only for breath, then quickly plunging again into its depths. He had discovered his soul, had plunged headlong into it, was submerged, breathless, happy, and unaware of any other world.

When his parents were a day's journey on the homeward road, they missed Jesus, hunted for him among the neighbors, and went back to Bethany, thinking to find him playing with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. When they found that he was not in Simon's house, they returned

to the temple, and discovered him among the rabbis.

Then Mary forgot . . . forgot her girlhood dreams, her oath of motherhood, the wistful years of the aftertime in Nazareth, with Jesus growing in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Forgetting, she berated him before the rabbis, saying:

"My son, why have you behaved like this to me? Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

Illusion fell from the eyes of the old men, as a veil falls from a woman's face. How ridiculous they had been, arguing with a strayed boy. . . . Here was his mother scolding him for disobedience!

But they waited for Jesus' words and nodded approval when Jesus, in a gentle voice, replied:

"Why did you look for me, mother? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?"

At this there was a blast of trumpets, to the chorus of Levites singing:

> "Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
> Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
> The King of glory shall come in."

To the sound of that choral, Jesus left the temple, followed by Mary and Joseph. Mary

was weeping. There was that in his face which made her feel that she had lost him. The days of her mothering were past. Her boy had grown up. The sword of all mothers had pierced her soul. God had answered her challenge and had taken her son. . . . She leaned against Joseph and found comfort in the left arm that encircled her.

She never quite understood Jesus from that day in the temple. He grew beyond her head, but never beyond her heart. A look of wonder and of awe was in her eyes as they climbed the Mount of Olives together, Jesus walking at Dagon's head, she riding, Joseph outdistancing them with mighty strides, eager for talk with Simon of Bethany.

Joseph knew Mary because he loved her. He knew her moods. He had laughed in his beard at Jesus' reply to her gentle scolding, proud of his son's wit and not at all displeased with a certain masculine independence of women, mothers and wives though they be. He recognized adolescence in Jesus' rejoinder. His son had grown up overnight, as sons do. . . . Henceforth he would cleave to his father. . . . They would go forth together, as carpenters, from day to day. . . . The lad *was* a carpenter. . . . Never was there his like with

a chisel. . . . As for a plane, under his hands it was a bird in flight, singing as it flew. . . . Together they would toil, double the daily wage, add to the house other rooms, for the old place was already overcrowded with children.

As he and Jesus worked together, he would train that fine temper of his son into the quality of a soldier. . . . The lad was full of noble anger. . . . He was a flame. . . . Well, he, Joseph, would feed that flame until the day of its bursting forth against Rome. . . . He never had agreed with Mary concerning their son. . . . She wanted him to be a prophet, like Elijah. . . . He wanted him to be a king, like David. . . . Yes, Joseph was pleased over the matter of Jesus' sudden manifestation of independence of his mother.

And yet, he was sorry for Mary. He knew that her tender heart was hurt, not so much by Jesus' retort to her rebuke, as by its discovery to her unfailing intuition that God had taken away her son. That is why Joseph of the great heart left Mary and Jesus together, and went striding on ahead for a good gossip with his old friend, Simon of Bethany.

Jesus was not angry at Mary, though she thought he was. He was still lost in the dis-

covery of his soul. His reply to her in the temple was not a rebuke; it was an ejaculation of surprise. For seven days he had continued to taste the cup of disappointment. A something that he had long ago discovered in Nahor—an evasion of truth by the retreat of words—had met him in the temple. Now he understood the confusion of noise in the Gentiles' Court, the sound of bleating and lowing and giggling and swearing and haggling. This sound was the voice of hell. Hell had invaded his Father's house because the priests were political impostors; the scribes, foolish and fumbling theologians; the Pharisees, conservative and bigoted ritualists! Together, priests, scribes, Pharisees, had betrayed Israel and insulted God! . . . No wonder the land of his fathers was invaded by Rome.

These things were in the thought of Jesus as he climbed the Mount of Olives with his mother, whose heart was calling to him. But he could not hear. He was angry, disappointed, disillusioned. He hated the temple. . . . He hated Jerusalem. . . . He hated the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees. . . . He resolved that, when he grew up, he would devote his soul to the sword. Surely there must be punishment of the rulers of Israel before Messiah

could come. . . . He would make way for Messiah. . . . He would follow David, would retire to the hills of Galilee, gathering about him a host of heroes, as David did when he retired to the stronghold of Adullam.

At the top of the Mount of Olives, Jesus stood to let Dagon rest. He turned and looked back. When he saw the city, he was filled with rage and lifted his staff against it. . . . One day he would return with banners, swords, and spears. . . . The consuming fire of God would burn, root and branch, the iniquitous ones who had violated his Father's house!

To Mary he was like the archangel Michael —lord of the flaming wrath of Yahweh. A fear of him grew in her heart as he stood there, glorious in his anger and thundering like a young lion the brave words of a Babylonian song:

> "Jerusalem, if ever I forget thee,
> Withered be this my hand!
> May my tongue cleave to my mouth,
> If ever I think not of thee,
> If ever I prize not Jerusalem
> Above all joys!"

Suddenly rage died within him and he began to weep. He was again only a boy of dreams. He ran weeping to his mother, who gentled him, her arms about him, with the soft

lullabies of his babyhood. The heart of Mary was happy, for God had given back to her the son of her soul, the fulfilment of her body. Yet she knew that the years would widen the distance that had begun between them in the temple. As she mothered him, her eyes were misted with prophetic tears that fell one day as she kissed the poor hurt feet of her son, fastened with nails to a cross!

This is the eternal glory of Mary, mother of Jesus: She was crucified before her son. Her head was wounded with thorns before thorns crowned him. Her hands and feet were nailed before his were nailed. Her heart was wounded, before his heart was pierced by the spear of a Roman soldier.

Therefore we love her, holding her first among women, sweetest of mothers, dearest of wives. It is good that, in spite of our variant theologies and quarrel of creeds, we should, Catholic and Protestant together, hail Mary—mother of the man who dared to be God! She is more than woman: she is the womb eternal —Mother Nature, throbbing in pain of her birth-pangs that the sons of God might be born.

We are told by Luke, poet and doctor, friend of Paul, that after these things Jesus

went down to Nazareth with his parents and "did as they told him." What history is written in those words! And how much is left to us in these days to fill in and make alive for our use!

After the bitterness of disappointment and the following rage of a mighty heart hurt by the travesties of truth, Jesus bowed his head and obeyed God. He obeyed God by doing the obvious thing: accepting life as he found it. On his way home, he reasoned with himself and concluded that what God most needed was obedience. . . . The fault with the world was that it refused to surrender itself to its Creator. . . . The clay had too much clack with the potter. . . . It failed the hand of the artist by leaning awry as it whirled on the wheel. . . . Samuel had said it for him—the other prophets had said it, too, but Samuel had said it when he answered Saul:

"Does the Eternal delight in burnt offering and sacrifice
As he does in obedience to his word?
Obedience is better far than sacrifice;
To heed him, better than fat flesh of rams."

As they neared the gate of Nazareth, Jesus smiled at his first great discovery. . . . He

would learn obedience through the discipline of common tasks. . . . Just as he had learned to say the Shema and, later, had mastered reading and writing on the pinewood slate, and, still later, had caught from his father the craft of carpentering, now he would tread the way of surrender to God's will by glad obedience to his parents. . . . It would not always be easy, but it would always be good. . . . He would argue no more. . . . No wisdom was ever won by argument. . . . He would cleanse his soul like a cup through simplicity and gentleness. Perhaps one day he would hear God's voice:

"You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

In this discovery Jesus returned to the fulness of his boyhood. He whistled and he sang. He danced with the children. His stories grew in vivid charm.

Day after day he worked with Joseph. Together they enlarged the house, till there was ample room for the big, happy family that filled the home with laughter and the noise of many words. Mary soon forgot her sorrow, and Joseph chuckled and rumbled in his beard. Nahor boasted of Jesus' learning, and Nazareth more than ever took him to its heart, in spite

of the envious who never forgave him for the magic of his smile, the wonder of his eyes, the sudden thrust of a sword in his words.

CHAPTER VII

THE SON OF MAN

JESUS studied under Nahor until he was fifteen, working in the meanwhile with Joseph. Through Nahor he had access to the synagogue library, which included the apocalyptic writings as well as the full texts of the Law and the Prophets. He had passed so far beyond his schoolmates that he no longer sat with them. Nahor now directed Jesus' reading, proud of the reputation that his student had made for the school in Nazareth, and more than ever sure of his destiny as a successor to Hillel, if not to the great Gamaliel; though Nahor did not follow Gamaliel, holding him a teacher with heretical tendencies, too modern, too unsound, and leaning overmuch toward Alexandrian speculations. He would make of Jesus a stout defender of the Faith.

Near the end of the fourth century preceding Jesus' birth, the Sanhedrin had fixed the canon of the Old Testament. After that, no one presumed to write in his own name. If a man had a thing to say through the written word, he said it in the name of some ancestor notable for his holiness, wisdom, and knowl-

edge. In the time of Jesus' boyhood at Nazareth, many writings of this kind had found their way to the old chest that stood in a room of the synagogue where Nahor worked as sexton and teacher. These writings were popular with the people but not with the Pharisees and Sadducees, though the Essenes set great store by them.

The reason why these writings were popular in Jesus' day was because they developed an idea which began with the statesman-prophet Isaiah, who, as the shadow of Assyria began to fall over Palestine, foretold a time when the arm of God would be revealed in a king like David. Isaiah was a poet with power over words, as an archer has power over arrows, sending them down the centuries to pierce the hearts of men. He sent his flight of words forth at a time when all Israel was afraid. It had broken faith with God, by forgetting, as nations do, the high moments of its past. In a terrible song of accusation, Isaiah described this infidelity of the rulers and princes of his people:

"Your rulers are unruly men,
Hand in hand with thieves,
Every one fond of his bribe,
Keen upon fees,
But careless of the orphan's rights,
And of the widow's cause."

What a picture of a nation's degradation and infamy! Even the women had lost the sweet purity of the days when Deborah inspired Barak to mighty deeds against the enemies of Israel. On them also this archer of barbed and wounding words poured his arrows of accusation:

"Since they are so haughty,
The daughters of Sion,
Holding their heads high as they walk,
And ogling with their eyes,
Walking with their mincing steps,
Their anklets jingling,
The Lord will strike their heads with scabs,
The Eternal will strip them bare."

Yes, the doom of God's judgment was near. He would let loose on Israel "the strong, full surge of the Euphrates." But after its punishment was past, Israel would arise in purity under the dominion of a hero-king described in one of the most inspired lyrics of the ages as

"A wonder of a counsellor,
A divine hero,
A father for all time,
A peaceful prince! "

But that was long ago. All that Isaiah had foretold had happened. The Israelites had been

spoiled and taken into captivity by Babylon. They had been beaten with many stripes under the successive rules of Persia, Macedon, Egypt, and Syria. True, they had regained Palestine; but now the hand of Rome was on them. Would this hero-king never come?

Tired of waiting, disappointed through the failure of the Maccabean party to free the land by the sword, the Pharisees had arisen as exponents of a new creed, "Justification by the Book." They were like the Puritans with their cry, "The Bible and the Bible only!" They believed that every word of the old Hebrew text was sacred, infallible, binding. Desperately they held to this creed, and clashed with the Sadducees—a group of wealthy, sceptical patriots, among whom most of the priests were numbered.

Between these two parties stood the Essenes —a monastic brotherhood. In the lonely region of the Dead Sea, these brothers lived apart from the world, celibate, austere, eating at a common table, lovely and gentle in their lives.

While the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day regarded the Old Testament as a closed book, the Essenes were students of the apocalyptic writings which began to appear soon after the dawn of the third century. These

writings contained some of the principal tenets of a Persian theosophy which many of the Israelites had brought back with them from Mesopotamia to Palestine and which the Essenes taught with modifications. They were true Israelites, believing in one God, Yahweh. But they retained the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, its fall into matter, its ultimate escape from matter by an ascent to heaven through purification of the flesh.

Out of this theosophical school, apocalypses or revelations began to appear. They were written by teachers who, for fear of the Pharisees and scribes, sought to communicate their message under the supposititious authorship of famous men of the olden days.

The theme of these writings had its roots in Persian theosophy. The world was in the awful hand of Satan. Man was his victim. Satan had thus far succeeded in his war with God, but God would one day intervene to snatch the world from Satan's hand, either directly or by a mediatorial hero of whom Isaiah had prophesied. In the old days of Saul and David, the king was called "the Lord's Anointed." The Hebrew word for "anointed" is "Messiah." The word "Christ" is its Greek translation. More and more these apocalypses sounded that

word, until in the course of time there came to the synagogue of Nazareth a well-handled roll of parchment called "the Book of Enoch." Its theme was *salvation through Messiah.*

There were other rolls in the old wooden chest, and how Jesus loved to finger them! He had all the tenderness of an artist for his paint, brushes, and palette; of a sculptor for his chisels, mallet, and marble; of a poet, student, scholar, for the feel of his books. He loved the old chest, used to sit with his back against it, his eager hands turning the wooden pins on which the parchment was rolled, his hungry, happy eyes racing along the stately, beautiful Hebrew writing, his heart beating to the tune of the noble words that he read.

Of all these writings, Jesus loved best the Book of Enoch, for there he found the name which he one day applied to himself—Son of man! In his imagination he walked with Enoch along the golden highway of Heaven, past the patriarchs, prophets, kings, and saints, to the glorious throne of God, where he saw, lifted above even Michael and Gabriel, the Saviour of the world in the nature and likeness of a man, yet sharing the splendor of the Eternal.

Jesus loved this heavenly man, believed that in him was the beginning and the end of all creation, the Alpha and the Omega of God's

creative Word. He believed that this heavenly One described something in God which longs to become man, something in man which yearns to become God.

As his rapture for the Son of man grew, Jesus thought less and less of a Davidic king spilling the blood of God's enemies until the bridle of his horse was red with it. He was now fifteen years old, gazing at the world and wistful for the coming of Messiah, certain of his existence at the right hand of God, and praying that he might be chosen as the messenger to prepare the way before him.

This unfolding of consciousness, this deepening of wisdom, were gradual in Jesus. With the years he went forward toward his manhood, which he met early.

Dagon was not what he used to be, but he still drew the high-wheeled cart and waited in the woods while Jesus' axe felled the trees out of which the yokes and ploughs and doors were fashioned in Joseph's shop.

Deborah had died some years before, but her calf was now in her place, giving Mary milk, curds, and butter for her children.

And the children—how they were growing! James was now toddling about, mischievous and noisy. The others were going to school.

Mary and Anna were learning to help their mother at the loom and with the sewing, the grinding, the baking, and the washing.

Joseph, whose rumble was deeper than ever, had plenty of help in the shop. Simeon, Joseph, and Judas were good carpenters in the making, though they lacked the strange skill of Jesus' hand that gave life to whatever it touched.

Prosperity had come to the house of Joseph. He was the notable man of Nazareth—the head of his clan, flamingly patriotic. He still talked of swords, spears, chariots, and fighting men; still boasted to Nahor that Jesus had more than once indicated the warrior, while Nahor pished and poohed, stoutly gainsaying Joseph with proofs of the coming man of thought, not of action.

Again and again Jesus was oppressed by the gentle tyranny of his elders.

Nahor said, "A rabbi! . . ."

Joseph said, "A David! . . ."

Mary said, "An Elijah! . . ."

While they said these things, Jesus, from a rock on a hill, was learning to say:

"Not as they will. Not as I will. . . . Father, as You will!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE CROSS IN THE CARPENTER SHOP

OFTEN, as Joseph and Jesus worked together in the shop, there was much talk between them. One day Joseph pointed to a notched perpendicular beam that supported the low roof.

"My son," he said, "when you first came hither, on the day you walked, I stood you there and notched your height."

Jesus turned and looked at the beam. He chuckled, took his carpenter's rule, and measured it.

"How old was I, father?"

"Not more than a year, my son."

Jesus counted the notches.

"There are now sixteen, and I am nearly as tall as you, father."

"Nearly as tall, son, nearly as tall. If you keep on, you'll pass me, and I am just six feet in my sandals."

Jesus stood with his back against the beam, resting his arms on a stout cross-piece—nailed there to hold some of the heavier tools.

"See, father, my head is above the cross-beam."

The afternoon sunlight poured in on him, limning his stalwart body against the black oak cross. His brown, bare arms were muscular. His red-gold, unturbaned head touched the beam a foot above the transverse section. His throat was round and full. On his mouth and chin a thin growth of chestnut-colored hair was visible.

Joseph looked on him with pride, thinking of David and the day he went down into the valley of Elah to meet Goliath. What a son . . . what a son! How he loved him, and how different he was from his brothers—promising lads, good, willing, obedient, but not like this young, golden David leaning against a cross! Well, the only cross that his son should know would be the sword of many battles, fought to free Israel from Rome.

But Joseph was troubled about ways and means. Though there was enough income to keep the large family that God had given into his care, there was not enough to send Jesus to Rome where he might learn the arts of war against that day when Rome should hear the song of this David's sword. Of course, there was his friend, Simon of Bethany. Simon was wealthy. He was a patriot. He shared Joseph's ardor for emancipation from Roman rule. Si-

mon, too, was in league with the patriots of the dispersion—loyal Israelites living everywhere in the Empire. He must talk this matter over with Simon, must go to Bethany with Jesus.

Joseph frowned. He was troubled about Mary. She would never consent to this scheme. Mary had such notions in her head! Well, a man must be lord of his own castle. What did women know about the ways of men? They were too sentimental, too given to thin, airy ideas—ideas that were impractical in a rough-and-tumble world. After all, the world was a man's world, to be taken and held by force. Yes, he would take Jesus to Bethany and talk the matter over with Simon.

Turning to Jesus, Joseph said:

"My son, stand away from that beam. You look like an angel on a cross! That's not the way to win the world for God. Not by a cross, but by a sword will you win that world!"

Jesus stepped back from the beam.

"Why, it is a cross! I never saw it before. A cross. . . . What a cruel torture for a man's body! I saw a thief hanging on a cross outside Sepphoris last year. They had nailed his hands and feet to it, leaving him there to die. . . . His eyes were bloodshot, father. . . . His tongue was hanging from the corner of his

mouth, and he was moaning dreadfully. . . . The flies were about him in a cloud. They tortured him. I could see that they tortured him! So I ran down the hill, dipped my turban in a brook, returned, and lifted it to his lips on a reed. I could just reach his lips with the reed. He sucked at the wet turban, and then said thickly: 'God bless you, boy. God keep you from a cross!' Then I knelt below the thief and prayed that God would soon send Messiah and make an end of crosses."

"Messiah! How do you think he will come, boy?"

This was Joseph's moment. He would take it. But he must lead up to his idea, must act a bit, be laconic about it. . . . He bowed over his plane and sent it singing along the edge of a pine board, waiting for Jesus' answer.

"I think that Messiah will come to earth as a little child. He will have to come that way, father, for only as he is one of us can he save us."

"Rightly said, my son, rightly said. But how will he save us? How shall we know him?"

Jesus sat astride a cedar beam which he was mortising with mallet and chisel. He tapped away for some time before he answered:

"Who knows, father! That question was too

hard for the rabbis in the temple, and Nahor only fumbles with words when he tries to meet it. Only one man will know Messiah when he comes. To him it will be given to declare him."

Joseph stopped planing. This was new matter for him. . . . He had not thought of it. . . . Jesus was taking the lead. . . . There was no getting ahead of that boy. He began to rumble into his beard, as he always did when perplexed or angry.

"What are you talking about, son?"

"The messenger of Messiah, father."

"Messiah will need no messenger. He'll be his own messenger."

Jesus smiled. He loved to tangle his father in words.

"Have you not read the scripture, 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me'? Messiah will not come until his messenger has come."

Joseph left the bench. With one stride he stood by Jesus. Now must he unburden his heart to his son. Tenderly his right hand touched the head of Jesus, bowed over his task, tapping, tapping, with his mallet on chisel, at the doorpost.

"My son," he said deeply, "if Messiah must have a messenger, behold him in your father!"

The mallet and chisel fell from Jesus' hands. He looked up into his father's face.

"My father!"

"My son!"

There was silence in the carpenter shop. It seemed to each that all the world was listening, waiting, hoping. To Jesus it seemed that the low arch that opened on the street with the singing fountain was crowded with angels. To Joseph it seemed that the sword of Messiah was sweeping like a pendulum through the sky over Nazareth.

Jesus stood up and faced Joseph. How alike they were, and yet how different. The difference between them was the difference that marks fire from heat. Jesus was fire—fire that glowed in his eyes, burned through his face, radiated from his body. Jesus was fire—the fire of a soul flaming with a mighty passion for the will of God. Joseph was the heat of that fire—the heat of love's longing for the consummation of God's will in the release of Israel from the thraldom of Rome.

In these two God was manifested. By this perfect union of father and son He had found His way into the world that so needed Him. Jesus became Son of man before he became Son of God. He became Son of man through obe-

dience to Joseph, whom he loved with such devotion that he found it easy to walk toward his goal between an earthly and a heavenly father, holding each by the hand. The story of Jesus and Joseph is told in the word by which Jesus named God.

As these two stood together, the glory of God gathered about them. It flooded the mind of Joseph with the conviction that his son was Messiah. It enfolded the heart of Jesus like the tender closing of fingers on a flower by the hand of one who chooses it from its fellows.

From that moment, Jesus began to make ready for the hour of his appearing to men. He did not know that hour. God only knew it. He would leave that to God. But he would make use of the years between this moment and that hour. He had much to do, much to learn, before that hour. He had already found that by the path of obedience man's soul goes up to God. He would continue to obey. He would accept life as he found it. Life, with its daily toil, its anxieties, its perplexities, its temptations, was a good school for God's sons. He would go back to that school and prepare himself for God's hour.

At first, Jesus fell in with Joseph's plans. He was always a warrior. He loved brave deeds.

Nazareth was set in the midst of a great battlefield, Esdraelon.

From his eyrie on the hill behind Nazareth, Jesus gazed at the setting sun that stained the sky curving over a glimpse of the Mediterranean. He could see Mount Carmel, where Elijah slew the false prophets. East of Carmel loomed the bulk of Mount Gilboa, where Saul had died on the point of his own sword.

At every angle of his vision, Jesus marked the deeds of heroes. His memory and imagination released them from their tombs. Once more they marched to prove themselves in the fulfilment of their prowess, with sword and shield and chariot. The air was filled with a rain of arrows. The ground rumbled with the tread of armored men, who followed the thundering chariots into battle. He could hear the sound of bugles above the roar of voices, through the crash of spear and sword on shield and helmet. He could see the fiery splendors of the sun reflected on the burnished mail and swift-darting weapons of war. Surely the God of Israel was a God of battles; so must Messiah be a Lord of hosts.

But always against this warrior spirit of her son, Mary set the gentleness of her soul. She did not agree with Joseph. He was such an

obstinate man. . . . All men were obstinate. Knowing that he had made up his mind about Jesus, she watched and countered him wherever she could. In her girlhood, Mary had come under the influence of the Essenes and believed with them that God is revealed not in force but in love. But she would not argue the matter with Joseph. Argument only made him more obstinate. She could, however, gentle her son out of this notion of a militant Messiah. In her quiet way she led Jesus up to his final vision of Messiah as servant, quoted to him those songs of the prophets which he afterward used in the hour of his temptation, when he had to choose between his father's and his mother's religion. Of these songs of the prophets which Mary loved to sing to her son, Jesus liked this most:

"Out of Sion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
And he shall judge among the nations,
And shall rebuke many people:
They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
And their spears into pruninghooks:
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more!"

In the course of time, Simeon the harpist died. Nazareth was filled with lamentation.

The people built for their minstrel a tomb near the rock where Jesus used to sit with his dreams. Here the harpist was laid to rest, and a great stone was rolled against the door of the tomb.

Next to his father, Jesus loved Simeon best. Simeon had taught Mary the art of song, had fashioned for her a harp on which later he trained the hands of her son to make such music as David made, singing the battle-songs of his people. The day came when Simeon, in the presence of the minstrels of Galilee, crowned Jesus with a laurel wreath, as first among the sons and daughters of music; for Jesus went beyond his master in skill upon stringed instruments. His voice was like the sound of many waters. When he sang, the birds were silent and the brooks were still. The wind delayed its tones. The trees held their breath. Children ceased crying. The harsh words of anger died down to silence. The lamentation of mourners dwindled to a sob, passed, and was no more.

On the day that Simeon was laid in his tomb at the top of the hill, Jesus stood before the stone that was rolled against the door, and sang to his harp David's hymn of death:

"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down
In green pastures:
He leadeth me
Beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me
In the paths of righteousness
For his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk
Through the valley
Of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff
They comfort me."

As Jesus sang, the tears of the mourners dried on their cheeks. The bitterness of death passed. It seemed to them that God had sent His angel with a message of immortality. For a while they knew that there is no death. They looked in wonder on the beautiful boy of Nazareth, standing before the tomb of the harpist and singing the dread and terror of death out of their hearts. He looked like an angel—tall, golden, and comely in the white robe that he wore. His voice was lifted on the wings of a new victory—the victory of man's soul over the last enemy, death! They never forgot that moment. In the years that followed, the rumor of this young David began to link the villages

and towns of Galilee in an ever-widening circle of hope.

Though there were always the envious, the critical, the doubtful, there was also an increase of those who felt the charm, the glory, the power of Jesus. In these latter was the beginning of his many followers. Christianity was planted, and flowered, in Galilee. Its growth was gradual. Jesus was not sudden. When at last he came out of the wilderness and began to preach, his world was ready for his word. It knew him and loved him. Blessed indeed were they who, when the Master came, were ready and watching.

When Jesus was twenty years old, Joseph died and was buried. His death challenged Jesus, more than the death of Simeon. Out of his sorrow, he gathered strength to set his soul against the last great enemy. He would find a way to master death. . . . God was the God not of the dead but of the living.

Broken with loneliness for his father, and tender toward his mother in her constant tears, he climbed the hill and sat with his head against the door of Simeon's tomb, facing death as he had never faced it before. Here he pondered the mystery of the tomb, grappled with

his doubts. He thought of the haunting cry of the psalmist: "Shall thy loving kindness be known in the grave, and thy faithfulness in destruction?" Surely there was an answer to that question.

Then it came to him that his father was wrong, his mother right, concerning Messiah. Messiah must overcome death. To overcome death, he must renounce it. To renounce it, he must throw away the sword—the messenger and servant of death. If God is the God of the living, he is never the God of battles. They who take the sword must perish by the sword.

Jesus looked down over Esdraelon with a new vision. Again he saw the archers, the spearmen, the horses, and the chariots of Israel. Had these old heroes helped God bring life and immortality to light? They had not helped God; they had hindered Him. God needed love—not hate. He needed love beyond the measure of a man's love for a maid, of a mother's love for her child. Messiah must be the perfect lover. He must become the perfect lover by obeying the God of love. To obey the God of love, one must forgive one's enemies; must go the second mile with him who demanded the first mile; must turn his face again and again to the hand of the smiter.

Standing with his left hand against the door of Simeon's tomb, his right lifted above his head, Jesus prayed:

"My Father, I thank You for this hour and its truth. I will go down to men, women, and children, and learn to love them with all my heart. Keep me from the hasty word, the suspicious thought, the hurting hand. Teach me in the years that are before me how to conquer death by obeying love."

Jesus went down the hill to Nazareth and entered Joseph's shop. He stood before the cross, recalling the day of his father's challenge. As he looked, a sudden shaft of light touched the cross and turned its rude black shape into glory. He thought of the poor thief to whom he had given a drink of water, and remembered his oath against crosses. Then he knelt quietly before it.

CHAPTER IX

THE BOAT-BUILDER OF CAPERNAUM

The death of Joseph laid on Jesus the full burden of family care. He had resolved to prepare himself for his service in the world by making himself master of his immediate duties. These he fulfilled with all the love of his heart, with all the ardor of his imagination. He saw that the way to God led through all acts of love; that God could give Himself to men only as men gave themselves to one another; that he who would be God's servant must first be every man's servant.

As he went on from day to day, Jesus felt life's perplexities. There were times when business was dull; when, in spite of his diligence, wages were low. He had to clothe, feed, educate his brothers and sisters. The strain of that task often tired him. Then he would climb the hill and talk the matter over with God.

One evening he looked over Galilee with new understanding. Galilee was his world. It was a world of opportunity.

The idea of increasing his business came to

him. Two of his brothers were old enough to handle the local trade of the carpenter shop. Joseph and Simeon were next to him in years. They were good carpenters, steady and reliable. Judas and James would soon be able to help. Perhaps, later, he would extend the little farm that gave vegetables and fruit to them, and fodder for the cow and ass in the old stable. . . . Yes, he would hand over the local trade to Joseph and Simeon, leave Nazareth, and travel through the towns on the lake. . . . Capernaum was a thriving place. . . . He could make it a centre for boat-building. . . . He had never built a boat, but he knew he could build as good a one as any he had ever seen on Gennesaret.

Jesus smiled. He loved the hills, the woods, the fields. He loved the smoke of morning and evening chimneys, the gray-blue reek of clustering roofs. But he also loved the curve of a shore, the huddle of beached hulls empty of their masters, pointing forlornly at the hills with their leaning spars. . . . The memories of Gennesaret were pleasant. Twice he had visited the lake with Joseph, who also had ambitions as a boat-builder.

That night there was a family council in the living-room which opened on Mary's gar-

den. It was a simple but comfortable room. A low table stood in its centre. On the table the evening meal was spread, and about it Mary and her children reclined on a rug of her weaving, each with a cushion to ease the left elbow. Time had dulled the edge of Mary's grief, and the bubbling mirth of her children challenged her laughter. Jesus always managed to make his little ones laugh. It was ever his way to describe what he loved as little, as it was ever his way to claim what he loved. "My little ones," was what he called Mary and her children.

Reclining at the table, Jesus looked at his mother, and said:

"Little mother, I have a plan for your consent."

"What is it, rabboni?"

"This, my dear: Let Joseph and Simeon manage the old shop. Let me go to Capernaum and build boats. It is a good business. The fishing on the lake was never so good. The lake towns are prosperous. There ought to be a fine chance for a handy man to lead some of that prosperity hither to Nazareth."

Mary's face saddened. The thought of Jesus' going stabbed her heart like the point of a sword. She knew that his hour was nearing. Though she had dedicated him, was aware of

his purpose, the woman in her shrank from the ultimate surrender. Tears were in her eyes, so full of love for him, as she said:

"Ah, rabboni, rabboni! How can I let you go from me?"

"Now, mother Mary," called Joseph from the other end of the table, "don't take on like that. Our brother's idea is good. Business is bad in Nazareth. Capernaum is not so far away. Jesus will be coming and going all the time. Perhaps, one day we shall all move to the lake. I love boats and fishermen. And you know, dear one, that Jesus always succeeds. Build boats? . . . I tell you, within the next five years, he'll be building all the boats on Gennesaret, and we'll be helping him, too."

Jesus nodded at Joseph in approval, as Simeon joined with his brothers, saying brightly to Mary:

"We'll clothe you in silk and fine linen, dear; throw pearls about your neck; put rings on your fingers and bracelets on your ankles, and some day build you a house of marble in Capernaum, if you let our brother go."

James and Judas clapped their hands, shouting: "Good! Good!"

And Mary and Anna leaned toward their mother, smiling.

There was no resisting them. Mary laughed through her tears and said:

"You are all set against your mother!"

A chorus of "No, no!" came from her children.

Jesus stood up, lifted Mary to her feet, kissed her, and said:

"Little mother, we are all yours, dear. You have been the best of mothers. You must let us always be the best of sons and daughters. I will go to Capernaum to-morrow."

The next day Jesus rose early, bathed his strong young body; fed old Dagon, on whom the years were beginning to tell; fed Deborah's daughter; sang his morning hymn to the sun; played a while with the birds, until the family gathered about the breakfast-table to break bread together before he left on his new adventure.

At the end of the meal, Jesus stood up, threw his wallet over his shoulders, took his staff, kissed them all, and walked swiftly through the door and down the street, not daring to look back. He knew that his mother was weeping, weeping bitterly for him at the door of his father's house! . . . His father's house? He wept for Joseph. He missed him sorely. But he was keeping faith with him and, as he strode

along, his heart was blithe again. He whistled and sang, looking out on the world with new eyes. He was now a man, with a man's work in a world of men. He would do what was given him to do, until that day when his other Father should speak the word of his appointment.

When Jesus came to Capernaum, that town numbered more than ten thousand inhabitants. It stood on the northern shore of the lake, not far from Bethsaida. The lake is shaped like a harp. It is thirteen miles long and eight miles wide at its northern end. In Jesus' day it was called, sometimes "the sea of Galilee," sometimes "the sea of Gennesaret," and sometimes "the sea of Tiberias." Nine towns stood above its shores, all thriving, populous, and melodiously named. The partial list of those lake towns as given in the Gospels sounds like a chime of distant bells: Tiberias, Magdala, Bethsaida, Chorazin, Gergesa, Capernaum!

In these tones is the sound of the name of one who was called Jesus—a young man of about twenty-three, approaching walled and domed Capernaum, which crowned a hill above the glittering lake of Galilee. His heart was exultant as he looked upon the town of his dreams, a city on a hill which could not be hid. Here he would find a larger opportunity to

serve his "little ones," and, perhaps, one day build for them that house of marble which Simeon had prophesied.

Jesus began his work in Capernaum by seeking out a well-known boat-builder, Zebedee, to whom he had a letter of introduction from his old teacher, Nahor. Nahor had been glad about Jesus' decision to go to Capernaum, believing that as his pupil travelled, the world would discover in him the great rabbi of his, Nahor's, making.

"You have stayed overlong in Nazareth, my son," he had said as he gave the letter to Jesus. "It is time for you to travel. You know that a prophet has no honor among his own people. Take this letter to Zebedee. He is a good man, a true Israelite, a master-builder of boats. From him you will learn, as you have learned from me, my son. May the Lord keep watch between us."

Zebedee was a prosperous man. He lived in a commodious house near the wall that fronted the lake. His shop, larger than Joseph's in Nazareth, adjoined the house. Here Jesus found him at work on a boat, helped by his two stalwart young sons, James and John.

Zebedee was thin, wiry, and swarthy. His eyes were dark, burning with an inward fire be-

neath craggy eyebrows. He was a man of swift decisions, revealed in a rapid, jerky movement of his hands and head. His speech was crisp, his voice sharp and somewhat hard.

As Jesus entered the shop, Zebedee looked up from his task. He was setting the garboard strake of the boat. It was nice work, demanding the close attention of the master-builder and his two helpers.

Jesus saw that, and watched without interrupting Zebedee. He delighted in the smell of the steamed plank, in the sound of the mallets on the pins that fastened the strake to the ribs and to the curving stem of the bow and stern of the boat. He met the eyes of Zebedee with a swift smile, leaned against the door of the shop, and waited.

Zebedee liked him at once for that. He was too busy to talk, but not too busy instantly to appraise the newcomer. He liked him for the smile, and he registered approval. Here was a man who understood the difficult moments of a carpenter. He was not like those foolish fellows who never know when to hold their chatter.

James and John also looked up. James was dark and slender, like his father. John was tall, broad-shouldered, and fair, like Jesus.

James gave Jesus a kind but hasty nod, and went on with his work, hammering a pin into the plank with a heavy mallet. John was boring a hole with a large auger. He stood on the plank, his shoulders bowed over the auger, his muscular arms straining as he bored; but he lifted his head and looked at Jesus blithely. In that look, his heart leaped with love; and when the plank was set, he was the first to meet Jesus with eager, open hands.

"Welcome, my brother," he said. "You are a stranger in these parts. Are you come to stay in Capernaum, or are you passing through on your way elsewhere?"

Jesus met this welcome with an eager laugh. He liked John at once, met his embrace, and answered:

"I am come to Capernaum with a letter for Zebedee from Nahor of Nazareth."

"I am that Zebedee, my son. Give me the letter. I know Nahor well. Who are you?"

Zebedee took the letter from Jesus, who replied:

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph the carpenter, seeking to learn the craft of making boats."

Zebedee read the letter.

"H'm," he said, "if what Nahor tells me is

true, you are a wonderful fellow indeed. Well, and so you are a carpenter! That is good. I need a handy man here. Welcome, Jesus of Nazareth. These are my sons, James and John. I will teach you my trade. Let me see what you can do with an adze."

Thus began the life of Jesus in Capernaum. He worked early and late in Zebedee's shop, lived with him, mastered the principles of his teacher's craft, winning the hearts of Zebedee, and of his wife and sons. Zebedee was proud of his new apprentice and soon began to consult Jesus in the matter of designing larger, swifter, and more seaworthy boats.

As the months went by, the friendship between Jesus and John ripened. They took long walks together along the shore, talking intimately about that which concerned them most, the redemption of Israel. Jesus, however, kept his secret from John. He was sensitive and shy about it. He felt that he would hinder God if he spoke of it, even to such a good, understanding friend as John. But he found in him, more than in any other man he had met, either in Nazareth or Capernaum, one who seemed by nature destined to play a part with him when his hour should come. John strengthened his

conviction that Messiah would not be the Davidic warrior-king. More and more he was coming to feel that Messiah would be the prophet of God and a teacher of men, as his mother believed.

One evening, as Jesus and John walked along the shore, they met two young fishermen sitting near a beached boat, mending a net. One of them was a huge fellow, with a deep-chested laugh—roaring and hearty. Thick black curls made his head massively royal. He had a short, black, curling beard. His forehead was low, broad, and full, above deep-set, twinkling, dark eyes that met Jesus' look directly. The other was almost as huge, but more gentle—a man with a tender mouth, and with the eyes of a dreamer.

As Jesus and John stood, the big fisherman nodded at Jesus, and spoke to John:

"Hello, son of thunder. Where did you meet yon David of the ruddy beard and the blue eyes?"

John laughed, laid his hand on the speaker's head, and said:

"Simon, you great roarer, this is Jesus of Nazareth, my friend. . . . Andrew, greeting. Less noisy than your brother but equally good and dear. . . . I bring you Jesus, who is working with James and me."

Simon dropped his net, arose, and looked at Jesus, towering above him. He seemed a mountain of a man, wind-swept, craggy, precipitous, titanic.

"Greeting, my David. Here you are, back again with Jonathan, your old friend. Have you come for war and the song of shields, against our Roman taskmaster? God curse and blight them with the plagues of Egypt!"

Andrew stood up from his work and shook his head at Simon:

"Simon, my brother, that voice of yours travels far, and the spies of Rome are everywhere. Be careful or they will crucify you. These are dangerous times, and it behooves us to be wary of sudden and unmeasured words. . . . Greeting, Jesus of Nazareth. You are a David and our good friend is a Jonathan. Oh, that they were with us now to lead Israel out of these perils!"

Jesus looked on Simon and Andrew in love. He saw into their hearts. When his hour came, he would call them, as he would call James and John. Meanwhile, he must wait, work, watch. No man knew the hour of the Son of man, save the Father who would send him to men.

"Simon," he said, "it is good to know you and Andrew. John has told me of you. My

heart talked with your hearts before my eyes beheld you. Let us walk together on the way of the Father's will. One day He will tell us what we are to do; for surely the kingdom is at hand."

"That's the talk, my David!" roared Simon, smiting the bottom of his boat such a blow with his mighty fist that the timbers sounded like a drum. "We'll make that kingdom come. Galilee is full of brawny men like us, waiting for a David. By his harp and by his sling, I swear that you are he!"

Then began that friendship which changed the world. Jesus guarded his secret. Day by day he worked in Zebedee's shop. Such was the cunning of his hands that, by the end of the year, the fame of his work overflowed Capernaum to Bethsaida and Tiberias. Zebedee prospered. He sent Jesus from town to town, taking orders from the fishermen for boats. Jesus liked these journeys. They deepened his knowledge of the Galileans, who came to love him, wondering at his wisdom, eager to hear his words, and saying to one another:

"Surely a prophet is in our midst. One day he will speak and then we shall know that God has visited His people."

Whenever Jesus returned to Capernaum, he

sought out Simon and Andrew. He loved to go down to the shore at the close of the day and sit with them as they worked. He soon learned to make, as well as mend, a net, and sometimes, when a fair breeze was blowing, he and Simon would launch a boat and sail away into the sunset. At such times, Simon taught Jesus how to steer, handle the sail, and meet the tricky squalls that are always sudden on the lake. Simon was proud of his skill and liked to display it before Jesus, who used to smile at the big fellow's vanity, loving him for it. Jesus liked Simon's simplicity, courage, honesty, and gusty laughter. What a rock of a man Simon was!

Occasionally, Jesus went to Nazareth, his heart full of happiness over the success of his work. He added to the farm, encouraging Judas and James to cultivate the land, while Joseph and Simeon worked in the shop.

These homecomings were now the great events in Mary's life. She never knew when Jesus was likely to appear, and lived from day to day with a song of hope in her heart. Meanwhile, she plied her loom and taught Mary and Anna the duties of the house, till they were able to bake, weave, and sew as well as their mother. Whenever Jesus came, she opened her arms to

him, standing in the doorway of her house to greet him, as mothers do. She always seemed to know the day of his homecoming, and would hear his steps long before his feet were at her threshold.

After this manner, the years went by. They were the years of a simple, active, loving, honest man who walked the road of the trivial round and the common task. It is not easy to measure those years and their significance to men. The poetry of legend, the art of ritual, the lure of theology, the romance of religion, have veiled those years with a mystery which baffles even the earnest quest for the truth about Jesus before his hour came. But one thing is certain: He continued to grow in wisdom and grace, long after he attained the fulness of his stature. As he grew in wisdom and grace, the eyes of his world were more and more on him in eagerness of a great hope. Galilee was weary of Rome; and the sweetness, beauty, and charm of Jesus filled his people with wonder, love, and expectation.

CHAPTER X

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

One day there came out of the wilderness of Judea, a man full of the storm and rage of words. He went up and down the banks of the Jordan, thundering against the sins of his people. He was a wild, uncouth, formidable person. His name was John. He was the son of Zacharias, a priest of the temple.

But John was not a priest. He cared nothing for synagogues or temples. He was indifferent to rituals, liturgies, and other ecclesiastical machinery. It is possible that he was a monk trained for his work by the brothers of En-gedi, full of passion for simple righteousness, indignant with the hypocrisies of priests, with the futilities of rabbis. His preaching was as uncouth as his manner. He derided rhetoric. He had no fine pulpit manner. He used no theological *clichés*. When he spoke, his words were hammers falling mercilessly on the hearts of his hearers. He startled Palestine. From every quarter of the country, people gathered to hear him, wondering at his words. Delegations were sent from the Sanhedrin to report on this wild fellow, who handled them roughly.

"You generation of vipers," he said, "who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Stop boasting about your descent from the loins of Abraham. See these stones? I tell you, God can raise them up in your place. Repent . . . repent! The kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Andrew and John were among the first to follow this new prophet. Simon laughed at them, but Jesus was profoundly moved. Day by day he went to Bethabara, where the prophet raged, and watched him baptizing his converts in the Jordan. Had Elijah returned? John resembled Elijah, wearing the sheepskin of the old prophetic order. He sounded like Elijah. Surely the messenger of Messiah was here.

Jesus was now in his thirtieth year. He had bowed his neck to the yoke of love, learning through obedience that self-mastery which made him distinct from all other men. He had lived the past few years in Capernaum, known and loved by many. He had lived in simplicity, entering with joy into the lives of those who were able to receive him. He had feasted with his friend Simon on the day of Simon's marriage. He had made a great supper to which many were invited when his sisters, Mary and Anna, were wedded. He had toiled to lift the shadow of poverty from the door of his father's

house. He had left nothing undone. His brothers were prosperous. His mother was happy. He was now free to follow the path of his destiny.

Listening to John at Bethabara, Jesus' conviction that his hour was upon him rooted and grew. Then, one day, the fiery prophet saw Jesus face to face.

The course of human history, from Adam to that moment, changed. The mighty river of life, roaring down the years, was held as John and Jesus met, then turned into a new channel.

Strange. They were only two young patriots, meeting, probably, for the first time. They were cousins. John was Jesus' elder by six months. They may have tumbled together on the same floor, may have been suckled at the same breasts, for Elizabeth and Mary were friends as well as cousins. But it is almost certain that they met as men for the first time at the Jordan.

John had lived at En-gedi from childhood. He spoke after the manner of Elijah concerning the great and terrible day of the Lord that would close the old order and bring in the new with Messiah, whom he announced as one mightier than himself:

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost

and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

The amazing genius of Jesus was all-absorbing. Deeply concerned with the religion of Israel, from his boyhood a scholar in its literature, he missed nothing that pertained to the kingdom of God. His mind grasped the political, economic, and social problems of his age. From the hill beyond Nazareth, he had seen the kingdoms of the world through the wide-reaching process of his mental analysis of the Old Testament and its cognate writings. Through them he had traced the historical windings of that road which the feet of his fathers had followed from Chaldee to Palestine. He had marked the rise and fall of Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian dynasties. He had measured the irresistible march of Rome. On that day when he met John at the Jordan, he was fully aware of his world and ready for his hour.

Jesus and John were alike in their knowledge of the reality of the spiritual world and in the possession of that character without which God is always an enigma. This character knits all spiritual men in one communion and fellow-

ship. It is the character of the lover and the giver. As John preached, Jesus' heart beat in unison with his heart. He felt in John the presence of a son of God. He saw in him a man of supreme attainment through the discipline of service. John's every word was the word of God. God spoke to him through the lips of the prophet. He heard God saying:

"Jesus, you are My son. I am pleased with you. You have not failed Me. Move up now to Me. Do not be afraid. Come, for all things are ready. . . ."

Then it was that Jesus and John stood face to face.

John saw a kingly man clothed in a white robe and wearing a white turban that deepened the red-gold of his flowing hair and curling beard. He looked into wide-apart eyes that gathered and held the color and depth of the sky over Jordan. Instantly he knew the man, and, in a voice that rang with the music of a supreme exultation, said:

"I have need to be baptized of you, and do you come to me?"

Jesus saw a tall, emaciated man with eyes that were fire, with a voice that was thunder. His black hair was shot with silver. It billowed above his shoulders like a cataract over its crags.

He wore only a soiled sheepskin. He was standing in the river and the skin was wet. To Jesus, John was Elijah reincarnated and come to call him to his deed of redemption. He said, in answer to John:

"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness."

As Jesus came up from the water of baptism, his soul was quickened to full consciousness. His eyes were blinded by the water, and as he regained vision, he saw a white dove flying over the river. To him it was a sign. Noah had sent forth a dove from the ark to discover a reborn world, rising in holiness from the baptismal purifying of the flood. As the dove was a sign to Noah, so it was to him. The day of the birth from above had come. God had appointed him to declare it.

Jesus passed over to the other side of the Jordan and went on his lonely way into the wilderness. He needed quiet now as he had never needed it before. He was happy. He was bewildered. He was terrified. His imagination was in a tumult of creative ecstasy. He had always been sure of God. God was his Father. He had lived with God before the foundation of the world. That he had learned from the Essenes. The soul was a bit of God, possessing

God's eternity. Physically he was Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary. Spiritually he was the son of God, made in His image and likeness. Even before the days of Abraham he had lived on earth. Perhaps he was David; and John, Elijah. Levelling his glance at this truth, a vista of the ages opened to him. He saw with such clearness of perception that his reason almost gave way. He was shattered by what he saw. Beyond David, Abraham, Adam, he had lived with God! . . . Was he that Son of man whom Enoch had described to him, the day he found the roll of his writing in the chest of the synagogue at Nazareth?

The hours were lengthened into days, the days into weeks, as Jesus pondered these things. The sense of time fell from him as he gained eternity, rising above the clamor of his brave young body for food. The carnal in him was transmuted into the spiritual, and then he knew that he and God were one.

He saw that God wanted to enter into men by way of the first man who would admit Him through obedience to His will. God had dared to become man; man must dare to become God! . . . Could he dare to become God? . . . Was he worthy of that attainment? . . . How could he become God? By complete surrender

of himself to God. He would give up to God his body, mind, and soul, that He might reveal Himself to men in human simplicity. Henceforth he would hold every impulse in abeyance. He would impose neither love nor anger on God. He would empty himself even of the attributes of the man Jesus.

At this conclusion the Tempter came to him.

His physical selfhood pleaded against the awful annihilation:

"How can you treat me so? See, I am hungry. I want food—I want food. I must eat. It is all very well for you to pretend that you are eternal. I am not. I am of the earth. I was fashioned of the dust and to that dust I shall return, if you don't feed me. What is goodness —what is morality—apart from me? I have normal needs—you cannot ignore them. If you let God take possession of me, He will destroy me. I do not want God. I want bread. . . . I want bread!"

His mental selfhood laughed at him:

"You can't help the world by all this fasting, this negation of the body. Feed the body. Keep it strong. Make it the vehicle of the mind. See, you have genius. Was ever a man like you? And how you have wasted your years, as a carpenter. Faugh! Here is a better way for you. Do what

Joseph, your father, would have had you do. Go to Bethany. Simon is rich. He will lend you money. With money you can buy your way into Cæsar's palace. Go to Rome. Mix with princes and warriors. Dazzle them with your wit, wisdom, and charm. You know you can do that, Jesus. The world has always bowed before you. Accept your acknowledged endowments and go with them to Rome; and when you are ready, turn Cæsar's sword against its owner!"

His spiritual selfhood took issue with him:

"Why bother to make bread out of stones? Why play with swords? Here is a better way. Seek out the temple. How the rabbis will delight in your learning. You will soon outrival even Hillel, as Nahor said. Then you may use political cunning and remove Caiaphas from his place. The high priesthood is yours for the taking. Take it and make the temple God's house. Then God will come to Sion and begin His reign on earth."

At the end of each of these pageants of body, mind, and soul, Jesus won his victory by the wisdom that Mary had given him.

He said to the first voice:

"Man shall not live by bread alone."

To the second:

"You shall worship the Lord your God."

To the third:

"You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

These words had been written upon his heart by Mary when she taught him the Shema in the days of his early boyhood, as he stood before her, his hands behind his back, his eyes on her eyes, his lips obedient to her lips, the sweet treble of his voice blending with the gentle, low murmur of hers.

But he was weary! He had beaten his body into obedience to his will. He had branded his mind with the sign of his cross. He had lifted his soul like an empty cup that God might fill it with the new wine of His kingdom. Nor did he know what God would do with him —what terrible task He would set to his hand. He knew only that God's way was a brave way, a good way.

He began to descend the mountain where he had fought his battle. Upborne by the peace that was in him, he did not mind the weary body, the aching head, the lonely soul. These he would learn to co-ordinate. He had mastered them. In time they would obey him gladly. In the meanwhile he heard the call of the world —the world he had come to save. How would the world receive him?

Jesus remembered the day that he had knelt in his father's shop, wondering if a cross might be the price of the world's redemption. Well, if so, he would pay it. The world was worth that. If by a cross he could release the sons of God to the possession of their inheritance, he would endure it for the joy of redemption that was set before him.

By this time the mountain trail wound past a huge boulder, against which he leaned, looking down into the valley. The Jordan turned among fair fields and gray-walled towns. The world was white for the harvest. He would go down with the sickle of his word and gather the grain into the bins of God. The wind was on his face, the song of birds mingled with the murmur of the multitude who waited for him —who waited for him and on whom he had compassion. They were like sheep without a shepherd.

John looked up and saw Jesus, like an angel in the sun. The glory of God covered him as with a garment. In a voice that rang with the tone of trumpets, John cried to the multitude:

"Behold the Lamb of God is come to take away the sins of the world."

CHAPTER XI

THE LAMB OF GOD

"BEHOLD the Lamb of God!"

Jesus heard. He looked down on the multitude. He saw John standing in the river. The sun was rising. Its glory covered him. The multitude was swept with the emotion of John's discovery. John was triumphant. He had preached for months about the coming of God's kingdom. God's kingdom would come with Messiah. John believed that Jesus was Messiah. His conviction was Jesus' final confirmation. Messiah was not to be the warrior-king; he was to be the Lamb of God. As the Lamb of God he descended into the world that awaited him.

Among those who saw Jesus through John's eyes were Andrew and John. From the first they had loved Jesus. John had always shared with Andrew the feeling that Jesus would one day be revealed as Messiah. Now they knew. They were John's disciples. They believed that John was Elijah, returned to earth as Messiah's herald. Messiah would be revealed after Elijah. Elijah was the door through which Messiah

would enter into the world, for its salvation. During the days of their discipleship under John, they had communed together concerning Jesus. They had stood at the riverside when Jesus was baptized and had heard him talking to John. They had seen him pass on his way across the river into the wilderness, and they knew that he was going thither to face his hour. Day by day, they had waited for his return to the Jordan, as John had waited. There was no doubt in their minds that Jesus would return to the river, with the authority of God, to begin his Messianic work.

How great their joy was when Jesus appeared, descending the mountain trail, and stood on a rock near the Jordan, looking down on them in the glory of the rising sun. To them that was a portent. As the dove flying over the river was a sign to Jesus, so the disk of the rising sun behind their friend was a sign to Andrew and John. The hour of the world's redemption was at hand. Messiah had come!

As Jesus crossed the river, John met and blessed him.

Amazement filled the people. They began to talk in groups.

Some of them said:

"What! Jesus Messiah? Impossible! We

know him. . . . He is a carpenter. . . . His father was a carpenter. . . . He is a citizen of Nazareth. . . . Can any good come out of that village?"

Others said:

"When Messiah comes, the sky will be torn by lightning. . . . The earth will quake. . . . The sea will roll back and give up its dead. . . . The graves will gape and the righteous arise. . . . John is mad. . . . We have been deceived. . . . Come, let us go home. . . . Jesus the Messiah? We have been deceived!"

The crowd melted away, but not a few remained to gather about Jesus, saying:

"Jesus, we love you. . . . You have lived among us. . . . You are the rose of Sharon. . . . You are the flower of the stem of Jesse. . . . You are the fulfilment of the promise to our father Abraham. . . . You are gracious and good, and we are glad that God has chosen you. . . . Hail, Jesus, son of Joseph! Hail, Jesus, Lamb of God! Hail, Jesus, Consolation of Israel!"

The heart of Jesus was full of joy as he passed on his way to Capernaum, accompanied by his two friends and those of the multitude who had received him—rocks of his quarrying, out of whom he would fashion living

stones of the house not made with hands—the brotherhood of man.

Before he reached Capernaum, Jesus dismissed his followers.

"My little children," he said to them at the turn of the road that brought the town to their view, "wait until I call you. I have many things to tell you, but not now. Return to your homes. Take up your lives as though nothing had happened. The kingdom of God will not come with noise and excitement; it will come through the changed hearts of my disciples. You are my disciples. Be gentle. Be obedient. Be patient. Soon I will call you. . . . But be prepared for trouble. You saw what happened at the river? Let that be a sign to you. The world will not readily receive my words. This is the generation of sign-seekers, of men who will look for magic as the proof of spiritual authority. Good friends, love is the only authority. Blessed are you pure in heart, for you shall see God."

Jesus lifted his hands to bless them. As a field of barley bends to the wind, their heads bowed beneath the hands of Jesus, who said:

"My Father, I thank You for these little ones who believe in me. For their sakes I have sanctified myself. May they all be one as we are one."

Then he turned and, with Andrew and John, walked toward Capernaum.

Here is the wonder of Jesus: His Godhood did not dismay his friends. He made them realize the comradeship of God, placing them on happy, intimate terms with Him. God was no more the awful majesty of Omnipotence; He was the tender simplicity of Jesus.

As the three went on together, they laughed and chatted.

"I always knew you, rabboni," said John. "I never doubted from the first that you were God's Anointed."

"I cannot wait, Jesus," said Andrew. "I must run ahead of you and tell Simon."

Andrew fell at Jesus' feet, kissed the hem of his garment, arose, and ran singing up the hill to Capernaum. He entered his brother's house with a shout of laughter that ceased at the sight of Simon's face. What was the matter with Simon? . . . It was not like him to be sorrowful.

"My brother, my brother," he said tenderly, "what is the matter? You look as though you had entered the valley of the shadow of death."

"That I have, Andrew; that I have. Naomi is dying. While you were trifling your time at

the river, listening to that ranting baptizer, Naomi fell sick. We are weary from nursing her. She is dying."

Andrew embraced Simon.

"Be of good cheer, my brother. The Healer is almost at your door."

"What are you talking about, Andrew? You've lost your senses! There isn't a healer in Capernaum I haven't consulted. I have had the ruler of our synagogue here. They have all failed. Nothing can help Naomi now. I tell you, man, she is dying! Death is at our door!"

Simon began to weep, and his house was filled with the sound of his mighty lamenting.

Andrew smiled:

"Death is not at your door. John and I have found Messiah. He is on his way to you!"

Simon stared at Andrew through his tears. His face was working with grief. What was wrong with his brother? . . . He was as crazy as the wild prophet of En-gedi.

"What is that you are saying? . . . You have found Messiah! Man, you are beside yourself. Your wits have forsaken you. You . . ."

Simon turned and saw Jesus at the door. He began to cry, walking up and down the room, smiting his breast:

"Naomi is dying! . . . Naomi is dying!

. . . And here is Andrew mocking me with the foolishness of idle words!"

Jesus looked at Simon in tenderness and understanding. He knew the loving heart of Simon. He must help his friend. Now was his moment of manifestation. If God had appointed him to save the world, He would heal Naomi at his word.

He placed his right hand on Simon's shoulder and said:

"Friend, I am come that all may have life. . . . Take me to Naomi."

Simon drew back.

"What, you also, Jesus?"

With quiet authority Jesus said:

"Simon, obey me. Take me to Naomi."

Simon looked at Jesus in love and amazement. How Jesus had changed! What was this new majesty of word and gesture that compelled him? Falteringly, he said:

"Jesus, I don't understand you. What you ask is foolishness. I am a heart-broken man. I love Naomi. She is dying. I have done what I could to save her from death. Ruth is broken with grief. I know you to be a good man, Jesus, but you can't do this thing. . . . Yet there is that about you which compels my obedience. Follow me into the room of death. Naomi is beyond the

help of man. Only God can help her. . . . Only God can help her!"

Jesus followed Simon into the room where Naomi lay in a delirium. At her side was beautiful Ruth, weeping. Her heart was broken. Her mother was dying. She was so absorbed in her sorrow that she did not know that Jesus was near until she heard him say:

"Naomi, daughter of God, I am come with life for you!"

Simon stood at Jesus' side. John and Andrew watched from the outer room. Joy was on their faces. Jesus, their Master, was at the door of death. He would speak. Death would obey. At Jesus' word, Naomi's delirious chant died down to a sleepy crooning. Then there was silence. Simon began to tremble. Ruth arose from her knees, looking with wonder at her mother's face, from which the hectic flush was fading.

Again Jesus spoke, taking Naomi by the hand:

"Daughter of God, arise!"

Naomi looked steadily at Jesus, smiled, sat up, and laughed:

"What is the matter, my dear children? Why is such amazement on your faces? I am not ill. . . . I am well."

Simon fell weeping at Jesus' feet and cried:

"Depart from me. I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

Jesus bowed over him, drew him to his feet, kissed him, and said:

"Simon, you are my disciple. Now I will make you a shepherd of sheep."

Jesus did not immediately begin his ministry. On his return to Capernaum, he spent some time in Zebedee's house. He went, as of old, about his business. He and Zebedee finished a boat. Simon and Andrew went back to their fishing, but they were changed men. Simon was puzzled. He could not see why Jesus did not at once assume his Messianic office.

He grumbled and complained to Andrew:

"I don't see why the Master wastes his time in Zebedee's shop. Why doesn't he come and call us?"

Andrew replied:

"Simon, that's the wonderful thing about Jesus. He has seen God. He has talked with God. There's no doubt that he has seen and talked with God. One can see it in his eyes, hear it in his voice. Something happened there in the wilderness, I tell you. Jesus was always wonderful, but now he is different. He has authority. When he speaks, I hear God. And

yet, he is still the same Jesus. That's the wonderful thing about him. Think, my brother, if what happened to Jesus in the wilderness had happened to you. Would you carry it off the way he is doing? Any other man would be puffed up, and who could blame him for that? Imagine, if you can, how you'd feel if you had the power to heal as Jesus healed Naomi! Would you still be Simon, son of Jonah? You would not, my brother, you would not! So, I say, let us wait. Our Master knows what he's about."

Simon of the tender heart kindled to his brother's word:

"I'm a fool, Andrew. You're right. The trouble with me is that I want to force time and hurry things. There are times when I catch myself in a calm, blowing on the slackened sail. Ha, ha! That's me, Andrew, always blowing on the slackened sail! Well, we've a lot to learn by following Jesus. He has a load on his shoulders, to lift a hulk like me to the level of his vision; but I'm for him, Andrew. I'm for him! He won't waste God's time prancing up and down Jordan, waving his arms and roaring like a hurricane, as John did. He'll not do that. He'll turn the world upside down with his thumb. I always knew that he was David. . . .

'Ware, you Roman Goliath, David is come. . . . David is come!"

One morning word came to Jesus of a terrible thing: Herod had arrested and imprisoned John! John of the thunder and lightning; John of the raging word and the blasting eyes; John of the whirling fist and the ominous head—John, the prophet of God, was in prison! Jesus wept. He loved John, who had opened for him the door of the kingdom of God.

Then Jesus knew that God's hand was lifted toward him. He must increase as John decreased. God's work must continue, though prophets, priests, and kings pass away. Man must keep faith with God. If God remove a prophet, another must step into his place without fear.

Jesus stood up in the workshop of Zebedee and said:

"Father, I go now into the world. My meat is to do Your will. Bless me in this hour and guide me even unto death."

The shop was empty. Zebedee, James, and John had joined Simon and Andrew on the lake. Word of a silver shoal of fish, reaching in a crescent, like the moon, from the shore to the middle of the lake, had come to them early

in the morning. The boat had been launched. They were out on the lake with it, straining at the nets full to breaking with a marvellous catch of fish.

Jesus stood in the doorway of the shop, looking down over the lake. It was dotted with boats. He heard the babble of voices and smiled. Those dear fishermen of his were happy. Well, he would go down to them and call them to a greater thing—the fishing of men.

He left the shop, went out by the gate of Capernaum, and took the winding road to the shore. There was not a cloud in the sky. He looked with delight on the lake, glimmering like an emerald in a ring of gold. The hills were yellow, streaked with crimson, encircling the lake. The wind was odorous with the balsam of pines, the scent of cedars, the smell of apple blossoms, pink, red, and white, in acres of orchards sloping up to the hills. What a day! What beauty of God everywhere throughout the world! His heart was elated. His eyes were glorious with a poet's gladness. He sang:

> "And God saw everything that he had made,
> And, behold, it was very good!"

When Jesus reached the shore, the fishermen were landing their catch. They were

laughing as they tossed the fish from their boats into the waiting barrows.

Simon saw Jesus and hailed him:

"Welcome, Master. You've brought us luck. Here's food for a month. Our families are beyond need. The sale of these fish will bring plenty to our homes."

"Come, Simon and Andrew," was Jesus' answer. "Our work begins. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

With a shout of joy, Simon leaped to the shore, followed by Andrew. They knelt before Jesus, bowed their heads, and waited for his blessing.

"Come," said Jesus, "you blessed of my Father. Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Together they went on until they came to where James, John, Zebedee, and the others were sitting in the new boat. The catch was so heavy that their net had broken, and they were all busy mending it.

As Jesus drew near, John looked up and said:

"See, Master, our net is broken by the weight of the fish we have caught. The new boat is a lucky boat."

Jesus answered:

"Come, John and James. In the world, a

greater catch than this awaits us. Follow me!"

John and James looked at Zebedee, who nodded his head:

"Go, my sons. Follow Jesus. He has done all things well. The day of the deliverance of Israel is revealed in this abundant harvest of the lake. Surely God has spoken. Shall we doubt His word? . . . Jesus, Master, I give you my sons, even as God has given you to us. We love you. We trust you. We will all obey you; for we know that you are God's Son, the Saviour of the world!"

CHAPTER XII

THE GIFT OF HEALING

THE call to the fishermen was given on the day before the Sabbath. When Simon, Andrew, John, and James left their boats to follow Jesus, the morning was young. A long day was theirs and they took it with joy. They did not at once return to Capernaum. There was much to be discussed. Their hearts were eager for their Master's word. They knew that he had secrets only for their ears.

As they strolled along the shore together, John said:

"Master, this day is ours. Let us go into the country for a walk. There are bread and dates in my wallet, and James has a bottle of wine."

"Good!" said Simon. "Master, I have many things in my mind about this fishing for men, and I need time and quiet to talk them over with you."

Jesus answered:

"I like a hill beyond a town. I know a hill. It is far away. In my boyhood, I used to climb to a great stone on its summit. There I first

found God. One day we shall climb that hill together. . . . Meanwhile, there is one with an easy trail, behind Capernaum. Let us go thither and spend the day in communion about our work."

As they climbed the hill, silence gathered Jesus and his friends under its spell. The trail was steep and, strong climbers though they were, they needed their breath for its ascent. It led them past an orchard, past a vineyard, past a farmer's house with children romping at the door, past a grove of trees, to a sheltered glade above a precipice fronting the far-off mountain ranges of Galilee. Here they sat, looking away over the valleys and hills to the horizon against which the mountains thrust their sharp peaks, cutting the curve of the sky into gigantic fringes of purple, crimson, and gold.

The fishermen were silent. They loved beauty as Jesus loved it. Their inner selves were quickened into a new consciousness. Each dreamed of the days to come, days that would be filled with the manifestation of their Master's power. Crude though their conceptions of that power were, at least they had no doubt concerning Jesus. They had known him for several years. They had worked, feasted, and rested with him. He had always been lovely in their

eyes, and they had always wondered at his goodness and understanding. They were proud to be his friends. Good and simple, brave and true, these men were—fit for such a Master, who had chosen them to be his disciples and teachers because he knew their hearts.

Jesus sat leaning against a sturdy tree that shadowed him with its foliage. On either side of him, the disciples leaned on their elbows, sometimes looking out over the valley and sometimes looking up into his face, expectant of his word.

Finally Simon spoke:

"Master, what is the kingdom of God?"

Jesus answered:

"Simon, the kingdom of God is love in the hearts of men."

"But, Master, if that be true, then there's little chance for that kingdom on earth, for there's a deal more hate than love in human hearts."

"There you are wrong, Simon. Hate is the shadow of fear in the hearts of men. Men are afraid of one another. Love will cast out that fear, and then the kingdom of God will come to men."

"But you will not work that way, Master?"

Simon sat up as he said this. He was excited.

Argument always excited him. He was headstrong, a man of one idea at a time, and incapable of either logic or philosophy—the kind of man who is at his best in action, to whom the deed is inevitable.

Jesus smiled in answer. He was ploughing Simon's heart, as a farmer ploughs a field before he scatters the seed.

"You will not work that way?" continued Simon. "The heart of man is desperately wicked. Here and there only will you find it hospitable to love. So, if you intend to establish the kingdom of God on earth, you will need to startle the world with miracles. Man needs authority. That's why Cæsar is a success. I hate him because he is the enemy of my people; but I admire him, for all that. He knows what is in men."

"Not so, Simon. Cæsar does not know what is in men. God is in men!"

"Satan is, Master; not God."

"Man is the son of God."

"Son of Satan, I say, son of Satan."

"My work is to reveal to man that he is God's son. For this I came into the world, that through me men might have life and have it abundantly. God is love, and every one who loves is God's son. Do you love God, Simon?"

"Yes, Master."

"And yet you hate men!"

"Only some men—men who are hateful because they hate."

"If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar, Simon. For how can a man say, I love God, whom he has not seen, and at the same time hate his brother whom he has seen?"

John laughed:

"Ha, Simon, our Master has you there! I will remember that, Master. What you say is a hard thing. I wonder if we shall be able to feel as you feel about men?"

Jesus answered:

"John, no man can be my disciple until he has learned to love."

Here Andrew looked up into Jesus' face and said softly:

"Master, we love you."

With the glory of his soul in his eyes, Jesus looked at Andrew and said:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandment."

There was silence. The disciples looked at one another, wondering at Jesus' word.

Then John spoke:

"What is your commandment?"

"That you love one another, even as I have loved you."

"But we do love one another," urged Simon, "and we all love you. I love you so much, Master, that I would follow you to prison and to death."

Jesus looked gravely at Simon.

"Simon, are you sure of that?"

"Of course, I'm sure of that! Who wouldn't follow a friend to the door of death itself?"

"How do we follow a friend, Simon? Only as we are loyal to his highest. If you are loyal to that which is highest in me, one day you may follow me to death."

"Ha! There's a challenge in that, Master, and I'll take it. More than that, I like the thought of fighting. Will you establish the kingdom with a sword? Well, I have one in my house. From boyhood I've kept it bright and sharp, always hoping that one day I might use it in the battles of God. Lead us, Master, lead us into action, and we'll follow you."

"Simon, Simon," Jesus' voice was tender. "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then would my disciples fight. There must be no fighting in my name. Force is not the way. There is a long climb before you, Simon, but one day you will reach the top of the hill of

truth, and then you will teach my brothers what you see. Be patient, meanwhile, and follow me. My days are not many, and there is much to do."

Then John drew bread and a horn cup from his wallet, while James took from his girdle a leather bottle of wine.

Jesus took the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

"I am the bread of life. If you eat of that bread, you shall never hunger."

When they had eaten, Jesus took the cup which Andrew had filled for him, and said:

"I am the wine of life. If you drink of that wine, you shall never thirst."

And the four friends of Jesus bowed before him, pledging themselves to his service. After this, they went down the hill together. As they went they talked of many things, but from this time they began to look at Jesus with worship in their hearts and with wonder in their eyes.

The next day was the Sabbath. Jesus and his disciples went to the synagogue which the Roman centurion, Cornelius, had built for the people of Capernaum.

Word of the healing of Naomi had startled the town, and there was much gossip about the

matter. Jesus was popular in Capernaum. Many regarded him as a prophet. But now even these were shaken by the rumor of his healing power. Not a few of them had heard of John's proclamation at the river. Was Jesus Messiah? A prophet, possibly; but surely not Messiah. He had lived for several years in Capernaum. That he was a fine boat-builder, a wonderful talker, a rare story-teller, a good man, yes; but surely not Messiah. Think of God's Anointed having lived all that time in their midst! . . . It was a disquieting thought. Messiah would be more than man. Jesus was just a man—a wonderful man, indeed; but, none the less, just a man. No. . . . Jesus might be a prophet, but not Messiah. Still, one could never tell. . . . God's ways were mysterious and past finding out.

Many gathered that day in the synagogue, wondering and watchful. A ripple of excitement marked the tension of the people when Jesus entered with Simon, Andrew, James, and John. A whisper rustled through the nave:

"There he is. . . . What a likely man! . . . A David, indeed. . . . A prophet. . . . Will he speak? . . . Quiet—he approaches the lectern and is about to read."

Jesus read the song of the shepherd-king in a voice that carried to his hearers all the cadences

of that deathless chant. He read slowly, tenderly, and with conviction, pausing at times to let a word sink in, noting its effect with earnest eyes. Then he sat down in the rabbi's seat and began to teach them:

"God is the Good Shepherd. He leads us through all the ways of life. Always He leads us. We are His sheep. He knows where the green pastures are, and though the road to them winds through the valley of death, He goes before us with His staff. Therefore, put fear out of your hearts. Fear is an illusion created by us when we labor only for the food that perishes. The food that never fails is the knowledge that now are we the children of God. Be not afraid for to-morrow. Put all your energy of love into to-day. You see how God clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven. If God clothes the grass, will He not much more clothe you, you fearful ones? The flowers neither spin nor weave; and yet, I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not robed in such beauty. You are robed in beauty—the beauty of God who is your Father, tender as a shepherd, closer than a shepherd's crook, more bountiful than a rich host, whose cup of life is full to the brim and runs over. Be glad. Be at peace. I am come to open

the little gate that leads into life. But you must go through in your own right as sons of the Father. Many will want to go through that gate, but they will fail because they are afraid, not knowing who they are—children of the Most High."

As Jesus talked, the congregation listened and wondered. They had never heard such words as these, which came to them like the music of a many-stringed harp. How different those words were from the dry-as-dust droning of the rabbis! Never did a man speak like this man. His words were words of life. For a time, at least, they were lifted above their normal consciousness, to share with the speaker his vision of the beauty of the human soul and the wonder of the infinite love of God.

Among the many who heard Jesus that day in the synagogue was Ozi, the half-wit. He was one of those souls who come to earth loaded with debts, debts which must be paid before they can go on into the fuller life. These debts last sometimes to the third and fourth generation, as Moses taught and as Jesus believed. Such was Ozi. He was tangled in the web of his own spinning. He had sinned against his holy ghost—his divine self—and he had not found forgiveness for three of his generations, or births.

Ozi was now forty years old. He walked with shuffling steps. His body was undeveloped. His tongue lolled through his lips. His speech was inarticulate. But his head was noble. His forehead was broad, full, and high. His eyes were prominent and staring. He was gentle. He was happy with children and at his best with them. According to the opinions of that time, he was possessed of unclean devils. They were the devils of his own making—the devils of mental pride—and they had brought him to this state.

Jesus knew him well, as he knew Jesus. Whenever they met, Ozi used to run to him with his queer, shuffling steps, making strange noises that sounded like a baby's laughter. At such times, he would look up into Jesus' eyes, trying to talk. Then Jesus would lay his hand on Ozi's head and talk to him as though he understood what the other was saying.

Jesus saw Ozi in the synagogue. His heart yearned toward him. He saw, too, that Ozi was strangely excited, and more than once during his talk willed him to silence. But, the moment that talk was ended, Ozi moved toward Jesus. His arms were extended. His eyes were rolling and full of tears that brimmed over and trickled down his twitching, contorted face.

The congregation were excited. They watched Jesus. They had heard of Naomi's cure. Would Ozi also be healed by this wonderful prophet?

Suddenly wild words began to pour from Ozi's tongue. He had found speech, but what wild words were these that he was shrieking at Jesus like a soul in torment of hell?

"Jesus of Nazareth, what business have you with us? . . . Have you come to destroy us? . . . We know who you are. . . . You are the holy One!"

Ozi fell at Jesus' feet, sobbing, gasping, and in terrible convulsions.

In a clear sharp voice like the snapping of a whip, Jesus spoke to Ozi:

"Be quiet! Come out of him!"

Ozi screamed. He rolled with foaming lips before the lectern. By this time the people were standing. They stared at Ozi rolling and shrieking on the floor, and at Jesus standing on the platform of the lectern, looking sternly down at him. He seemed to be in conflict with unholy, invisible powers. Would he win this fight? It was one thing to heal a sick woman, quite another to cast out devils from this raving, howling maniac. All the eyes of the congregation were now on Jesus. Oh, if only he could cast out devils! Would not that prove that

he was more than a prophet—the Messiah himself?

A gathering hope was in the eyes that watched Jesus—hope that turned swiftly to amazement and joy, when suddenly Ozi's body relaxed. Convulsion no longer shook him. The shrieks lulled to a whisper. What was Ozi saying? Hark!

And the people of Capernaum heard from the lips of Ozi a song of redemption:

"Thou art the God that doest wonders;
Thou hast declared thy strength
Among the people!"

With a mighty voice the congregation took up the song of Ozi, who knelt weeping at Jesus' feet:

"Thou hast with thine arm
Redeemed thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph."

That evening, as Jesus sat with his disciples in Simon's house, there was the stir and sound of people at the door. Simon opened the door and looked out. The street was full of people, bringing their sick ones to the healer.

Simon turned to Jesus:

"Master, all the world is after you. Shall I send these away?"

Jesus arose and walked to the door. He saw

the lame, the blind, the dumb, the diseased. The sight moved him to pity and he wept over them:

"Come unto me, all you weary ones, and I will give you rest. You are sons and daughters of the Eternal. According to your faith that God is your Father, be healed and whole!"

And the lame threw their crutches away and danced, crying:

"I can walk! . . . Oh, I can walk!"

And the blind:

"I can see! . . . I can see!"

And the dumb:

"I can speak! . . . I can speak!"

And the diseased:

"I am healed! . . . I am healed!"

When morning came, Simon looked for Jesus to call him to breakfast, but he could not find him.

While his friends slept, Jesus had left the town and climbed the hill where he and his disciples had spent the day before the Sabbath. The giving forth of his healing power had exhausted him. He had been too generous the night before. This new power must be guarded and conserved. Jesus was always increasing in wisdom, and he learned by this exhaustion of his body that the gift of healing was not his greatest gift.

Kneeling by the tree on the top of the hill, he talked with God about this new experience.

"Father," he said, "I thank You for this gift. But teach me proportion. Let me not lightly spend what You have given to me, lest I frustrate Your plan of revealing through me the glory that is in men—the glory they had before the world was—the glory that is now darkened in them—the glory of the liberty of knowing You as Father!"

CHAPTER XIII

AS A LITTLE CHILD

When Simon could not find Jesus anywhere in his house, he called Andrew and said:

"The Master is not here!"

"He'll be on our hill, Simon," Andrew answered. "He looked tired when we went to bed. I thought I heard him in the night, going softly through the door. He told me once that a house was a poor place at best; that the body needs the ground, with the stars above it, for perfect sleep. Let us call John and James, and follow him to our hill."

On the hill at sunrise, the disciples found Jesus. He was sitting under a tree. The glory of the dawn flooded the mountain peaks with a sea of gold pouring down into the valley. Jesus was singing his morning hymn to the sun. He was back in his mother's garden, thinking of his boyhood. How far away that garden-time was. He was grateful for those early years. His heart yearned toward Joseph, Mary, his brothers and sisters. He smiled at the memory of

Dagon and Deborah. He thought tenderly of Nahor and Simeon. God had been good to him in those years. He had given him love, laughter, and beauty of life without stint. Surely, God had planned his life for him. . . . God planned the life of all His children. . . . Only most of them were unaware of that plan. . . . That was why they were unhappy. Well, he would help them see this thing. Then the world would be full of God; and sorrow and tears, anger and pain, would pass away.

At the sound of voices and footsteps, Jesus turned his head and saw his disciples. John was opening his wallet, which he had stuffed with bread. James carried a bottle of wine. Simon held three fishes between two green leaves. Andrew had a box of tinder with a flint and steel in his hand. They were breathless from the climb, and laughing.

"Good-morning, Master," said Simon, unwrapping the fish. "Since you ran away from your breakfast, we have brought it to you. Come now, no more fasting. Arise and eat."

"Good-morning, my brothers," said Jesus, standing to meet his friends. "I *am* hungry. Let us eat, and then go about the Father's business. . . . Simon, what large fish! James, I am thirsty. John, bread of your mother's baking is

the bread of life. Andrew, is that fire hidden in your hand? Well, there is another fire which we must kindle."

"And that, Master . . . ?"

Andrew knelt and began to strike the flint with his steel.

"The Holy Spirit," said Jesus, watching the spark glow on the tinder, as Andrew blew gently on it, fanning it to flame. "See how the breath of life kindles the spark? So God breathed on man and he became a living soul!"

In a few minutes the fish were grilling above the coals. Together the companions of the new way sat about the fire, laughing, talking, and eating. They were happy, untroubled, believing in their young Master. They were like children, without fear in their hearts.

"Master," said Simon, as he placed a piece of fish between his bread, "you must come back to Capernaum. The town will be filled to-day with outsiders. The fame of you has spread to Bethsaida."

"My gospel, Simon, is not for Capernaum alone. It belongs to the world. No place may claim what the Father gives, who sends the rain to earth without respect of persons. Let us go now through Galilee. There are others who are not of this fold whom I will call. They are

good men, true Israelites, and ready for our brotherhood."

Then followed several wonderful weeks of journeying. Thanks to the large catch of fish, the fishermen were able to leave Capernaum. They were never so carefree as in those days. Often, when Jesus was gone and they were out in the world, they used to look back upon that time with tears—the tears we shed when the distance between past and present gives to things remembered their right perspective.

At Bethsaida, Philip and his brother Bartholomew were added to the disciples. On the return to Capernaum, came three brothers, Matthew, Thomas and his twin, James; and finally, Thaddeus and his brother Simon, with Judas of Kiryoth.

Jesus knew these men intimately and chose them for their worth. It is interesting to see how he trained them. He kept them always near, demonstrating by word and deed the principles of his gospel. Though these men often blundered, finding it hard to catch the drift of their Master's thought, they were one in loving and adoring him. They watched him as the healer, marvelling at his power to quicken the dulled human soul into a moment's conscious-

ness of its submerged divinity. Jesus was effective only where he found the stir of that divinity in the souls of men. He insisted that men were the sons of God; that their infirmities were the measure of their ignorance of their divine origin; that once a man was aware of his eternity, he would never die.

"According to your faith, so be it unto you," was his almost invariable formula of healing.

One day Jesus took his friends with him to the hill beyond Capernaum. Here, as he sat beneath his tree, he taught them the Beatitudes.

They had already seen these truths of the kingdom dramatized in the character and life of the Master. He offered them no theories. He gave them facts which they had touched through their life with him. He had promised them the same power which he was manifesting; but they must themselves become what he was—the supreme lover. It was blessed to be a lover, because love released God's nature in men. Once that nature was released, all things would be possible to men. They were to go forth into the world loving as he loved, forgiving as he forgave. If they would do that, the world would soon be full of this same knowledge, as the waters cover the sea.

But it would not be easy. In the world was tribulation, the tribulation of the hateful, who would mock them and their teaching. They must be prepared for torture, poverty, persecution, and death. The servant must not ask for more than his master. As men would do to *him*, they would also do to *them*. His disciples must love their enemies.

"What!" Simon interrupted, "love your enemies? Master, this thing can't be done!"

"But I have done it, Simon, and I always will. Wait and see."

"Must I love Cæsar? I can't. He is an octopus. His greedy tentacles cover the world, sucking the blood of men. I want to kill Cæsar and set men free from his tentacles. I can't love Cæsar."

Jesus answered: "Simon, Cæsar is a son of God, and your brother. Empty your heart of hate."

"Well, if I have to forgive my brother, how many times must I forgive—seven times?"

"Simon, I tell you that you must forgive beyond the perfect number. You must multiply that number by seventy, if you would be my disciple. My gospel is the gospel of love. My friends are the lovers. Who fails as a lover, fails me. Love is the only test of faith. You must

forgive as God forgives you. Beware, Simon; if you let hate live in your heart, Satan will sift you like wheat."

As he stood, Jesus sang to his disciples a hymn of love. He sang it in a voice of universal sound —the sound of water where the spring boils up from the pebbled cleft in the hill, to trickle down over the ledge of its basin to the rocks below, like summer rain on roofs; the sound of water increased by the rills that run from companion springs to become a brook racing to the river; the sound of the river flowing to the sea; the sound of the sea forever rising and falling and surging to the shore.

This was the song that Jesus sang to his disciples:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit:
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn:
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle:
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
For they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful:
For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart:
For they shall see God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

When Jesus had ended the hymn of love, he taught it to his disciples. After this, he questioned them to find how they had received it. From their replies, he knew that they did not understand his teaching. He was confronted with a stolid prejudice. His disciples were of the world. They had inherited its habits of fear, anger, and envy. Before he could win the world, he must communicate to them his spirit.

His patience with them was derived from his own gradual ascent to divine consciousness; and the memories of boyhood and youth helped him. He resolved to spend most of his time with these men. They were good, but slow of heart to believe. Yes, he would have to be patient with them. Soon they would learn. Then he would send them into all the world with his teaching.

Judas and Simon were alike in their stubbornness. Though Jesus always silenced them, they were continually harking back to their dream of a material kingdom. When Jesus said

a thing, they would pick it up and throw it about in their talk until it lost all resemblance to the original as it had come from the mind of the Master.

Simon was the debater, Judas the thinker. They were drawn to each other by an affinity of idea and motive. They were men of action, full of nervous and muscular force. Both loved Jesus, believed him to be the Messiah, but failed to grasp his spirit. They were too unimaginative for that.

Judas had a talent for organization. He was logical. His mind was swift. He reached the solution of his problems in terms of practical values. In these days he would be called a pragmatist. A truth was nothing to him apart from its applied value. From the first he urged that Jesus would set up his kingdom by miracles.

In this, Simon differed. He maintained that Jesus would establish his kingdom by the spell of his personality and the charm of his words, setting Israel on fire with a patriotic zeal for national independence to be won by war.

Even John, Andrew, and James held these opinions, though John, toward the end of his discipleship, began to see with his Master's eyes.

But Jesus knew his men and went on his

gradual way into their hearts, never doubting that one day they would catch and manifest his spirit. Though he loved the multitude that followed him, and though he spoke wonderful words to them, his mind was always on his disciples. He knew that his time was short. He understood his world too well to be deceived by the smugness of the Pharisees. They would tolerate him for a time, and then . . .

Jesus remembered the cross near Sepphoris and that other cross in Joseph's shop. But the cross would not defeat him—not if he could train Simon, Judas, James, and the others to understand the omnipotence of love. John, he knew, would see that first, and when Simon saw it, too, what a rock he would be!

When the disciples had been with him for several months, Jesus sent them forth on a trial ministry. They returned, after a time, full of embarrassment. They did not find it easy to work without their Master, and they were dejected.

"Master," said John, as the company were gathered in Simon's house, "we saw one casting out devils in your name; and we forbade him."

"Why did you forbid him, John?"

"Because he is not of our order."

Jesus said: "John, no man can do a good work in my name or after my spirit, who is not of this order."

"Master," interrupted Judas, "if every fellow claims you, how can your kingdom come? There must be organization among us. Without authority, organization is impossible. Here we are—the chosen group. To us the mysteries of your kingdom belong. The Holy Spirit can operate only through us. We know that the Holy Spirit comes from you, but we are your ministers, with power to communicate the Spirit by the word of authority and the laying on of hands. Therefore, it will not do for every Jack o' the Mill to be setting himself up on equal terms with us by using your name."

"Judas," said Jesus, "I am the vine, and you and your brothers are the branches. You must abide in the vine or you will be withered and cut off."

"Now, what do you mean by that, Master?" Judas frowned and began to walk up and down. He could never understand Jesus when he used the language of a poet. "What do you mean by this talk of a vine? I am talking about the organization—the body of believers—the faithful, you know."

Jesus looked at Judas in love. He under-

stood his friend's practical, unimaginative mind. He knew that Judas had qualities of leadership. He was the kind of man who would steward the mysteries of the kingdom without understanding them. He would be a force among men. They would turn to him in hours of doubt, leaning on his certain decisions and obeying his word. But he was in danger of frustrating the work of the brotherhood by his obstinacy.

"Judas," he said, "as the vine and the branches spring from the same root and are fed by the same sap, sō are we together in the Father's life. We are all His sons. His life is in us. Because you are my disciples, I am the vine and you are the branches. Through me you must put forth the fruit of good living. Good living is good loving. Only as you are lovers can you be my disciples. Therefore, love is the only authority. If a man love me, he shall know the truth, and the truth shall set him free from the hindrances of hate, malice, and all other wickedness."

Judas muttered in reply and walked away, frowning, while James plucked at his Master's sleeve and said:

"But, Jesus, we must have authority. It seems to me fit that John and I be first in this

company. We knew you before the others did. We have worked together for these many years. Make John and me first in authority."

Simon looked up and roared:

"Satan sizzle you in hell for your conceit, James! . . . Primacy belongs to me. I am the spokesman!"

Judas, who was leaning against the doorpost, looking down the street, quickly turned his head and in a sharp tone answered Simon:

"Spokesman! Well, and what of it? The ruler of this brotherhood must be a man of affairs, possessing business capacity. Let the prophet serve the priest in such matters. I will be first, I tell you. . . . I will be first!"

While the argument was growing hotter, Jesus called Simon's little boy:

"Laddie, come hither."

As the boy ran to him and climbed his knee, Jesus spoke:

"You have debated among yourselves who should be first in my kingdom. How is it that you do not understand? Why are you so hard of heart? Call no man master. Do not imitate the kingdoms of the world. Let there be no rulers among you. Hold him in highest honor who is the greatest servant. My authority is love. Your greatest lover will be your leader. I have called

you friends. Be friends, not enemies, for my sake. Wherever two or three are gathered in friendship, there will I be also. . . .

"Behold this lad. How gaily he came to me! He knows that I love him. A child knows, trusts, and follows love. You must be like this child. Simon, remember that. . . . Judas, be watchful of your pride or it will get the better of you. . . . James, how long must I be with you and John before you learn my spirit? . . . Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receives me, and whosoever shall receive me receives Him that sent me. He that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

CHAPTER XIV

THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR

One day, as Jesus sat in the workshop of Zebedee, talking to his disciples, there appeared at the door two rabbis from the synagogue, venerable and kindly men. Having seen him restore Ozi to sanity, heal the sick, and give sight to the blind, they regarded Jesus as a prophet and teacher. They were followed by a large company of men, women, and children, eager to see Jesus and to watch what he would do. The sound of their coming reached Jesus as he talked. He smiled and said to Zebedee:

"There is no more peace for me in any house. After this, I shall have to rest among the hills."

"Yes, Master," answered Zebedee, "if you will do all these wonderful works, men will pick you to the bones. You can't go on like this. Men are selfish. They seek only their own good. You will have to change them, or they will wear you out."

Simon was whittling a pine block into a boat for his boy. Looking up, he said:

"You will have to give us some of your power. How else can you handle all these ailing ones?"

Jesus looked at Simon and smiled:

"You are clumsy with a knife, my brother. Blade and wood must be as one. Your thought divides them. How, then, can you heal the sick? Only as you think into the tool and its task can the wood have life."

Simon gouged at the boat and split the keel.

"There I go," he grumbled, "my fingers are thumbs. I can see what I want to do with a knife and a bit of wood, but somehow I can't make what I see, happen. . . . Well, I'm no carpenter like you, Zebedee, James, and John; but when it comes to sailing a boat, I'm the best man on the lake!"

"Now you have said it, clumsy one," replied Jesus with a smile. "And to do my work, a disciple must first learn of me. Take my yoke, Simon. Then you shall have what is mine to give to men."

"What is your yoke, Master?"

"Obedience to the Father."

"But I *am* obedient. Don't I say my prayers, keep the commandments, go to the synagogue, and work for my family? What more can a man do?"

Jesus did not answer, for now the rabbis were at the door.

"Master," they said, "the slave of Cornelius

is dying. He has sent for you to come and cure him."

Judas frowned at the rabbis:

"Why should the Master go to Cornelius? He is come to save Israel, not Rome. Let the dog of a Gentile die, and Cornelius with him!"

"That's what I say, Judas," said Simon. "Who is Cornelius that the Master should go to his house? He might at least have brought the slave hither. . . God rot all Romans!"

But Jesus gave no heed to Simon and Judas. He looked at the rabbis and said:

"Why have you come to me?"

One of them answered:

"Because you are a good man and will see no man suffer. Cornelius is not like other Romans. He is the best officer Cæsar ever stationed in Capernaum. He knows the Scriptures. He loves us. Did he not build our synagogue? Master, do not listen to your disciples. . . . Disciples? We can find you better men. Come and heal the slave. Cornelius is a worthy man."

Jesus answered:

"I will go with you, good friends. You have love in your hearts. Wherever love is, there God is."

By this time, wherever Jesus went, there was excitement. The streets were blocked by the cu-

rious, the eager, and the glad. Even when he walked along country roads, word of his coming always gathered a crowd. His only escape was the hills.

As Jesus left Zebedee's shop, he was met by the stir and sound of a multitude. Imploring hands were lifted toward him as shrieking voices proclaimed the pain of crippled limbs and the agony of diseased bodies. But Jesus had learned to use his power sparingly. He healed only for a spiritual result. He reached always toward the soul. With all his tenderness, he passed by the malicious, the hateful, and the greedy.

"Do not cast pearls before swine," he used to say in answer to Simon's question:

"Master, how is it that you do not always heal?"

As Jesus drew near to the house of Cornelius, the centurion met him with a military salute. Cornelius was a man of noble appearance and glittered in his bronze armor and plumed helmet. Jesus lifted his right arm in response to Cornelius and stood waiting for him to speak. The crowd dispersed before the centurion, but watched from a distance to see what would happen.

"Master," said Cornelius, "I am not worthy

to be your host. You have only to speak, and my slave will be healed."

"Why do you say that, Cornelius?"

"Because I am a man with authority. If I, with the word of command, am able to send men into battle and death, you who are a prophet of the gods can send men out of death into life."

"Well spoken, Cornelius! A man's power is the measure of his faith. But what I do, is in obedience to the will of God. We are His sons. As we believe in God, God will be revealed in us. . . . Cornelius, do you believe in God?"

"Master, I believe in the gods."

"What gods, Cornelius?"

"Jupiter and the others."

"There is only one God, Cornelius, and we are His sons."

"Then we also are gods, Master."

"Do you know the Scriptures?"

"Many of them, Master."

"Then you may know the song of the Psalmist:

" 'I have said, Ye are gods;
And all of you are children of the Most High.' "

"No, Master; I have not heard that before. But I do know that there have been half-gods on earth—men like Hercules."

"Half-gods, Cornelius? . . . We must be whole gods, and then we shall do the works of our Father."

"Master," said Cornelius, kneeling at Jesus' feet, "show me how to be even a half-god, that I may do the mighty works of Hercules."

Jesus looked down at the centurion and said with a song in his words:

"Cornelius, I love you! You are straight and kind, brave and good. One day I will teach you how to be a true son of God. Meanwhile, know that your slave is healed at this hour—healed by you!"

Cornelius leaped to his feet and ran jingling up the street to his house, all haste to see if Jesus' word was true. As he ran, Jesus turned to his disciples and said:

"I have not found faith like Cornelius' in any of you."

This angered Judas, who muttered to Simon:

"Did you hear that? He thinks more of that Roman dog than he does of us!"

Still muttering to himself, Judas walked away, scowling. Nor would he speak to Jesus for the rest of the day.

The next day, Jesus left Capernaum for Nazareth. He longed for his mother and her

children. Though he had poured himself out for God, and though he had manifested His mighty power, he was his mother's son. He ached for her arms. He thirsted for her kisses. He hungered for her words. He was lonely for her garden.

The road to Nazareth led through the village of Nain. How long ago he had left Nazareth, and now with what increase of life he was returning! As they went on together, there was much talk among the disciples. They were always arguing over their Master's words, each man insisting on the rightness of his interpretation and scornful, to the point of bitterness, toward those who disagreed with him.

A sudden noise of wailing and loud lamentation disturbed the disciples, who looked and saw coming out of Nain a company of mourners preceding a body wrapped in coarse, unbleached linen, and carried on a bier by four young men. The funeral procession approached the disciples, who divided, standing on either side of the road, and watched Jesus as he went on to meet the mourners. What would he do? . . . Did their Master have power over the dead? They wondered and trembled.

The bereaved mother looked up and saw Jesus.

"Ah, Master," she mourned, wringing her

hands, "my son is dead. . . . My son is dead! I am a widow. Now I am childless. The hope of my old age is taken from me. My son is dead. . . . My son is dead!"

Jesus remembered the days when he had played at the fountain of Nazareth, weeping mimic tears with mimic mourners. He remembered the pain in his heart when tears were no more a masquerade but had become a reality. He remembered his oath against death, in the presence of this drama of sorrow, later before the cross at Sepphoris, and finally at the tomb of Simeon. He believed that God was not the God of the dead. He himself had come to bring the light of immortality to life. As he had healed the sick and cast out devils, he would destroy death. He would not do this in a moment; but one day, through him, there would be no death. But was it God's will that the spirit of the young man of Nain should return to this lifeless body?

Jesus prayed. In that prayer he emptied himself, offering his body to the mighty creative Spirit in whom all things exist. In that moment, the fulness of the Godhead that he dared possessed him. He touched the body of the young man and spoke in a voice which shattered with its sound the gate of death:

"Young man, I say unto you, arise!"

At this word, the body of the young man stirred and came to life—all under a Galilean sky, to the song of a mother and the broken cries of the awe-swept mourners.

The word of the Master's power went through Palestine like the music of harps. The multitude that followed him increased. In every vineyard, olive grove, and farm; down by the lake where fishermen still cast their nets and sailed shoreward with their catch; along the road and through the towns, people began to say:

"Jesus is a great prophet. In him God has again visited His people. Now is the kingdom at hand. Soon we shall be released from the tyranny of Rome. God has visited His people. . . . God has visited His people!"

Yet, for all his fame, Jesus was not popular in Nazareth. His absence for several years from that village; the inevitable changes of time—changes of birth and death; the removal of many to other parts of Galilee, made him a stranger in his father's village. His brothers had prospered. His sisters were married and living in Capernaum.

Mary, watching her son across the distance that grew so rapidly between them, wondered

and waited. Her heart was full. Its desire was satisfied. Her son was Messiah. She accepted as a matter of course the stories of his increasing ministry. He was wonderful; he always had been wonderful. He was God's Messiah, come to redeem Israel . . . and she was his mother!

From the moment of his departure for Capernaum until now, she had never doubted that Jesus' hour was near. He had often visited her at Nazareth, though, as time passed, his visits had become less frequent. But she had trained her heart to let him go about his Father's business. Shortly before the coming of John the Baptist, they had communed together. She saw then that he was gradually withdrawing from everything that he could call his own.

"Mother," he had said before leaving her the last time, "it will not be easy for you to give me up. When my hour comes, you must let me go; for the thing that I have to do will be harder than you can measure."

Then one day her son was at her door. . . . She met him as mothers do, with tears and laughter and open arms. She was not afraid of him, though all her world was talking about him. Word of his coming had reached her from Nain, with the story of the widow's son. She sang as she baked for him and his disciples.

. . . They should not come to her house and find her unprepared for hospitality. The table was spread and the supper was ready when at last he came, on the evening before the Sabbath.

That night, as they sat together in the garden, Jesus told her about his call at the Jordan. He opened his heart to her.

"Mother," he said, "God has entered into me to redeem the world. These mighty works are not mine, but His. I have emptied myself that He might dwell among us."

Mary wept in his arms, kissing him on the eyes and on the mouth as she murmured:

"Oh, my son! I am afraid. How can I bear to let you go out among the wolves of the world, who will tear you with their teeth!"

The next morning Jesus was awake early. He descended to the garden and stood naked beneath the stars, now rapidly fading before the dawn. The old jar was in its place, and he splashed himself with gourds full of cold water. Another cow and another ass were in the stable. His eyes softened at the thought of Deborah and Dagon. He smiled when he heard the young ass braying as Dagon used to bray. Entering the stable, he fed the ass and the cow, returned to the garden, and called to his brothers.

They came laughing down the stairs and

joined him and Mary at the breakfast table. There was much gay chatter among them as they sat together. His brothers were boastful of their business and gossiped about local affairs. They had no fear of him. To them, he was Jesus, their brother—dear, kind, gentle, and good. They were simple men, industrious, honest, and devoted to their mother. They regarded Jesus with pride and admiration; but they could not measure his genius—that was always beyond them. Jesus never made them uncomfortable by the manifestation of his power. To the end he was considerate, veiling his glory through his love for them.

Later they were startled, when in the synagogue Jesus, at the invitation of Nahor, rose and read from the Scriptures. The synagogue was crowded. Nahor, who still clung to his opinion that Jesus was to be the greatest of rabbis, handed him the sacred roll. He did this with much show of pride. He was not disturbed by the rumors of Jesus' healing power. The story of the raising of the young man of Nain had only convinced him that he was right in his estimate of Jesus.

"Why should he not heal the sick and raise the dead?" he had retorted, when told of these things. "I always knew that Jesus was set apart

by God to be the world's great teacher. After him comes Messiah, I tell you!"

Taking the sacred roll from Nahor, Jesus began to read from the prophet Isaiah. His voice, that has haunted the centuries with its music, thrilled the congregation. Not a few remembered him in the days of his boyhood and youth, but many were strangers to this tall, young prophet who had returned to his people.

As Jesus read, new meanings were discovered by his audience in the familiar words of the unknown poet of the Exile. How wisely the reader had chosen his lection! Old men and women closed their eyes, dreaming of the day of the promised deliverance, and the young worshipped in their hearts this Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph and Mary.

These are the words that Jesus read from the roll of the prophets:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel
to the poor;
He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
To preach deliverance to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

On the concluding sentence the voice of the

reader sounded like a trumpet. He met his kinsfolk and clansmen with a new challenge that awed and held them with its triumphant authority.

Then Jesus sat in the reader's chair and said:

"This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears. God's Spirit is on me to tell you that you are no longer poor, nor broken-hearted, nor captive, nor blind, nor bruised. You are God's children. His Spirit is in you. I am come to set you free from hatred, distrust, jealousy, fear, and the fettering of anger. Whosoever comes to me and receives my words and lives them, is like a man who has built his house on a rock. Come unto me, you broken-hearted and heavy with weeping, and I will give you rest."

As he ended his words, Jesus opened his arms in an invitation of all-including love. Tenderness, understanding, authority flowed from him to his hearers, who swayed toward him, many of them weeping as they cried:

"Messiah! . . . Messiah has come! . . . Messiah has come! . . . Look, how lovely are his eyes, and what wisdom is in his words! . . . The day of our deliverance is at hand. . . . All hail, Jesus of Nazareth!"

Across this cry of love crept a snarling crescendo of hate. An old animosity to Jesus was in

that snarl, the animosity of those who are never willing to concede to local genius its merited crown. This snarl began with muttering, through which could be heard:

"Blasphemy. . . . Jesus the Messiah? . . . Pish! We know him. Is not his mother here, and are not his brothers here? . . . He is mad and has a devil. . . . Cast him out—cast him out!"

In the confusion of that moment, Jesus measured defeat. His face paled before it; his eyes saddened. He turned to Nahor, and said:

"My good teacher, a prophet has no honor in his own country; but do not fear for me. My hour is not yet come. I will depart from Nazareth and return no more."

With a gesture to his disciples, Jesus disappeared through a little door behind the chest of the sacred writings. He had come to his own and they had not received him. . . .

CHAPTER XV

IN CANA OF GALILEE

AFTER Jesus had left the synagogue, Simon swept through the crowd, flailing with his arms and shouting:

"Fools, aside!"

He made his way to the reader's desk and faced the tumult with a roar of words:

"By the hair of Samson, I'll crack the skull of the first man who touches the hem of my Master's robe."

"Out with him!" yelled the leader of the tumult—a Pharisee from Jerusalem, sent by the Sanhedrin to watch Jesus and report concerning him. "Out with him! Stone him! He is a blasphemous fellow, like his master."

The Pharisee, a withered old man with a goat face, rushed blatting at Simon, who reached down and lifted him, kicking and squawking, high above the surging crowd. With a mighty swing of his arm, Simon hurled the Pharisee into the midst of the congregation and roared:

"Catch this jackal and throw me another!"

The Pharisee fell shrieking among the friends of Jesus, who caught him and swung

him, with shouts of laughter, from man to man, and threw him out of the synagogue into the street.

Simon's action changed the mood of the crowd. They joined in the laughter against the Pharisee, who now stood outside shaking his fist at the door of the synagogue and denouncing all Galileans as children of Beelzebub.

Meanwhile, Simon began smiting the desk and calling upon the congregation to give heed to his words. Impressed by Simon's courage and softened by laughter, the people sat down and gave attention to this wild fisherman of Capernaum with the booming voice and the flaming eyes.

"You men of Nazareth, God has raised up in your midst a prophet and a teacher like Moses and Elijah, and you have denied him. Henceforth you shall be remembered as a people who sat in darkness, preferring it to the light. Aye, the light of the world has shed its glory on you, and you have shut your eyes against it. Repent of this sin. Soften your hearts and turn to the Lord your God in tears and lamentation for this that you have done."

Simon's voice was thunder, and the people were moved at his words—the words of one who for his courage came at last to be called the Rock.

From that time, the other disciples turned to Simon as their spokesman. As the weeks went by, his name was more and more linked with that other name whose sound stirred all Palestine from Dan to Beersheba, from the borders of the Great Sea to the land beyond Jordan.

Leaving the synagogue, Jesus took the road to Cana. As he passed the fountain, he saw children at play. He paused, remembering his childhood, and tasting the bitter drink of the cup of his defeat. He stood in the carpenter shop, and recalled the hour of his decision. Would he find victory only in defeat? Was the cross indeed the will of his Father?

That night, in Cana, Jesus sat under the stars with his friend Obed. A cool wind blew in from the Mediterranean, stirring the vines on the wall, sweet with the smell of honeysuckle and oleander.

Love had bound these two from boyhood. Obed was the younger by five years, looking on Jesus as a brother. He had rejoiced at his friend's career, and was among the first to accept him as Messiah.

Messiah? . . . It is not easy for us to measure the naïveté of Obed's attitude toward Jesus.

How could a man of that time be at ease in the presence of the Expected One—the Only Begotten Son of God? Obed and his countrymen were not burdened by theology. They could love, weep, complain, argue, in the presence of Jesus, without any discomforting sense of the unusual; for they found in him a truth which we have almost lost—the tenderness of the infinite love of God, who had sent His Son into the world not to condemn but to redeem it.

Obed was eager, excited, and happy. On the morrow he was to be married to Ada, Jesus' cousin. He thought that Jesus' early arrival was due entirely to a desire to be alone with his friend on the night before the greatest of days. Jesus shared Obed's mood. He never thrust his sorrows on other people. It was easy for Jesus to cast care aside. His disposition was sunny, gay, hopeful. Malice, bigotry, hatefulness always startled and hurt him, but against these things he set his abounding joy.

Jesus said nothing to Obed about his failure in Nazareth. He gave himself up to Obed's joy, as though never a sorrow lurked on his path. Love like Obed's was not for him, who now had nowhere to lay his head. Father, mother, brothers and sisters, the possible love of a wife, the prattle of children, were behind him for the

kingdom's sake. But God had given to him the hearts of all lovers.

As Obed talked, Jesus leaned toward him, his eyes glowing with the ardor of the world's greatest lover. He was at home with lovers, encouraging them to talk, sharing their secrets and their sorrows, laughing with them, reverencing their silences.

Among the things that Obed said to Jesus were these:

"To-morrow will be a great day, I tell you. Love is at the door of my father's house. My neighbors have shared with me the cost of the feast. It will last for seven days. Much wine of Galilee is in the cellar. The skins that contain it are fat to bursting and moist with the sweat of its cooling. A great store of cakes, candies, dates, apples, figs, raisins, russet loaves of bread, and dried meats, fills my pantry. The guests will lack nothing at my wedding feast. . . . And then, the raiment! Jesus, there is a robe for every one, with wreaths of ivy and myrtle. 'Twill be a brave spectacle when the guests are gathered about the table, with all the colors of the flowers of the field in their beautiful array."

Jesus answered:

"When the bridegroom comes, there will be

a lamp, like a star, in every hand, and on every mouth a song!"

The following day, Mary and the disciples came to the wedding.

Mary was anxious about Jesus. Taking him aside, she said:

"You are too sudden, rabboni. I am fearful of the Pharisees, who are already set against you. I have heard of their whisperings. They will hurt you. Be careful, rabboni."

Jesus replied:

"Mother, my meat is to do the will of Him who sent me. Be not fearful. The hour is at hand when every one who hurts me will think that he does God service."

Mary wept and turned away. The mother was beginning to intrude upon the patriot and mystic who long ago had prayed that she might give to Israel the Messiah of God. Her fears for Jesus had been fed by the chagrin of his brothers. They were ready to follow a warlike leader, but they could not understand Jesus' passive acceptance of defeat at the hands of the Pharisees who had so cleverly planned his humiliation in Nazareth. Why did he not hold his ground? . . . Why had he run away? . . . All Nazareth was laughing at them!

Even the disciples were affected. They did not understand Jesus' sudden departure from the synagogue. Though Simon had dared the mob, he was disappointed in Jesus, and taking him aside, said:

"Master, why did you run away? You had nothing to fear. It was only a few Pharisees made all that stir, knowing that there are always stings where honey is to be found. Now they're puffed up and bragging about their success. You should have stood your ground. . . . You should have stood your ground."

Judas, seeing Simon and Jesus together, joined them, saying:

"Simon is right. You should have stood your ground. You have many friends in Nazareth, who looked to see you heal the sick and raise the dead. Instead of that, you ran away. Now they don't know what to think. Some are saying this and others are saying that. You've made it hard for us. Who will follow a leader who runs away?"

Then John came and, overhearing Judas, rebuked him and Simon:

"Brothers, how dare you speak thus to my Lord? Is he not the way, the truth, and the life? He is the vine. We are only the branches, drawing our life from him. Master, forgive these

foolish men. They do not know what they say."

Jesus looked at John with love and gladness in his eyes, saying to him:

"Henceforth you shall be called the Belovéd Disciple, for you alone understand my heart. When the day is come that I am gone from you, and there is anger and debate among your brothers, teach them, John, to love one another. Open their eyes to an understanding of the prophet who described me as one who never broke with rough hands the bruised reed, nor snuffed out the flame of the smoking wick. As for the Pharisees, they will constrain you to walk more than the first mile with them until . . ."

Jesus was silent, his eyes open upon something very high, holy, and far away. Before that look, Simon wavered, Judas blinked, and John bowed his head. They had already learned that the silences of Jesus were like the sound of doors closing. . . .

Jesus was happy at Cana. Here, among his friends, he soon forgot his failure in Nazareth. The mirth of the feast—the laughter of the lovers, come to pledge the love of Obed and Ada, the stories of the old men and the gossip

of their wives, the stir of feet dancing to the music of harps, pipes, timbrels, and tabours—filled Jesus with a prophetic rapture. He believed that God had sent him to announce the good news of His kingdom, and here already was the beginning of His rule in the hearts of men. Against the tyranny of Rome, the pride and insolence of the mighty, the cruelty and greed of the oppressor, the spite of the malicious, God was already sending His doves of peace and good will.

Wherever Jesus went, glad voices hailed him. Here were no enemies, no mocking faces, no hard, cynical eyes, no sneering mouths. Cana knew Jesus and loved him. Yes, he was the carpenter's son. Many had known him when, in his youth, he had come with his father, the master-builder of Nazareth, building houses as only Joseph and his son could build them. The children ran to him, demanding stories or bringing their broken toys to be mended by the long, magical fingers of the carpenter-prophet of Nazareth.

Mary forgot her fears; Judas and Simon stopped complaining. If any one was sick and besought Mary to speak to her son, she drew up her head proudly and said:

"He is good. He is of God. He is my son.

Blessed am I among all mothers. Whatever he tells you to do, do it."

Cana marks one week of the fulness of the Master's joy—joy like the water of tears turned to the wine of the heart's overflowing gladness —the joy of the mysterious cup at the wedding feast of Obed and Ada.

CHAPTER XVI

A NEW COMMANDMENT

It was still the spring-time of Jesus' ministry. Nazareth with its defeat, Cana with its victory, lay behind him. Like a river widening to the sea, the fame of the new prophet spread over Palestine. His name was on every man's lips. Upon the mountain slopes where the farmers tilled the ground, or down by the shores of either Gennesaret or the Great Sea, Jesus was discussed.

In Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin was shaken by the sound of Jesus' name. Who was he—prophet or impostor? Word of him made Herod uneasy as he stroked his beard, thinking of John the Baptist wasting in a dungeon of Machærus by the Dead Sea. Even Pilate—imperial Pilate, vicar of Tiberius—asked questions and frowned thoughtfully.

Every exaggeration of rumor spread like a weed through the country. The least word or deed of Jesus was turned and twisted to suit the taste of the gossip, be he farmer or fisherman, priest or scribe. Women at the well, children at school, lovers meeting under the moon of Lebanon or Sion, all were concerned about this tall,

golden man with the magical fingers and the many tones of a harp in his words.

"He raises the dead. . . . He cures lepers. . . . He casts out devils . . . walks on water . . . turns water into wine. . . . He is a devil. . . . Aye, the prince of devils. . . . He should be crucified—the blasphemous one who makes himself equal with God. . . . Another Gaulonite. . . . There'll be trouble in Galilee before long, aye, another rebellion. . . . All the world has gone after him!"

While these and other like words were being bandied about Palestine, Jesus went on his way toward his great moment. He toured the province of Galilee. He went down to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, making announcement of man's divine sonship. He accepted no tributes save those of love and trust. Words that were later attributed to him he never spoke; they were coined in loving hearts, eager to lay offerings of adoration at his feet. He never claimed primacy over his brothers. He said:

"Call no man master. . . . Why do you call me good? God alone is good. Worship Him, not me. . . . I am among you as a servant, a shepherd of lost sheep. . . . I have done nothing that you cannot do. . . . If you had faith in God, though it were as tiny as a seed, you

would level your mountains and lift your forests out of your path. . . . All that is mine is yours; but you must love one another if you would do my works."

Love was the word of the Master's teaching. In order that the world might understand this love, in the end he turned aside to an olive grove whence the soldiers drew him in fetters and led him away to be crucified!

Somewhere along the path of Jesus, two of John the Baptist's disciples came to him with a message from their master:

"Are you the coming One? Or are we to look for another?"

A strange question. John had initiated Jesus, had proclaimed him at Bethabara as the Lamb of God, had said, "I have need to be baptized of you." Had the lonely, awful months cankered the faith of the prophet in his great successor? This at least we know: The sound of Jesus' name had penetrated the gloomy castle by the sea to reach the ears of its prisoner. No dungeon-darkness could rival the light that was flashing over Israel from the soul of Jesus. Its rays challenged the terrible gloom of the prophet's prison and gave him hope that his work was being continued in this young Master of Galilee.

Yet John was disturbed. He missed the thunder of damnation in the preaching of his successor. Man was exceedingly sinful, was lost and under the doom of judgment. He must be brought to see his peril, that he might supplicate an indignant Deity for pardon and release from the penalty of sin. Rumor brought him word of one who was friendly with sinners, aye, even with drunkards and prostitutes! This would never do. Sinners were in the way of the fulfilment of God's righteousness. Sinners must either be converted or blasted with the curse of Gehenna. There could be no half-measures with sin. God's righteousness must be upheld.

Then, too, John heard in the message of Jesus no word of ascetic discipline. How could souls be purified without the discipline of fasts and frequent prayers? Jesus was too sweet, too affable, too tender. He lacked hardness, masculinity, authority. No, the Galilean had failed to convince men of sin!

But even as John pronounced judgment against Jesus, he was haunted by the nobility and goodness of the man he had baptized at the river. Oh, the glorious eyes, so pure, so true, so understanding! . . . John turned and tossed on his pile of filthy straw to the monotonous clanking of the chain that bound him to a

bronze ring set in the wall of his dungeon under the Dead Sea. He could not escape the challenge of those eyes that rebuked him for his doubts. . . . So he groaned and prayed in agony of spirit, till one day he looked up to the grating above the dungeon and saw two of his disciples, and said in a doleful voice:

"My friends, seek out this man Jesus and bid him banish these doubts that torment me. If he *is* Messiah, then my soul shall be comforted and I can meet death in peace."

When the disciples of John met Jesus with their master's broken cry, he smiled and said:

"Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he who is repelled by nothing in me."

Returning to John, one of the disciples said:

"Master, be comforted. We tarried with Jesus for more than a day and we saw and heard all these things which he bade us tell to you."

And the other disciple added:

"There is no doubt, dear master, that Jesus is Messiah; for the glory of God is on his face and in his words and deeds."

Out of the darkness of that dungeon there

gushed a song like a sudden fountain at the foot of a great rock, the song of John, the prophet of Bethabara:

"The man who sits in darkness
Has seen a great light.
On him has arisen
The glory of Israel.
Now let me go, Lord,
Let me go hence
And be no more seen,
For you have comforted my soul
With the words of your truth."

This message from John to Jesus was the occasion of one of the Master's intimate talks to the crowds who followed him. He loved the moment's word, deriving his form of address from the nature of that which called it forth. Pick a flower, call attention to the flight of a bird, gather a bundle of grass for the oven, and Jesus was ready with the right word that told of some new aspect of the kingdom of God. The visit of John's disciples was such a moment, and Jesus used it for a parable given in a chant that poured into the hearts of the people, who swayed to the sound of his many-toned voice:

"What did you go out to the desert to see?
A reed swayed by the wind?
Come, what did you go out to see?

A man arrayed in soft robes?
Those who are gorgeously dressed and luxurious
live in royal palaces.
Come, what did you go out to see? A prophet?
Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet.
This is he of whom it is written,
Here I send my messenger before your face,
To prepare the way for you."

When he had ended this chant, Jesus paused as if to gather up his thoughts about John; and then began to speak in a full, steady voice:

"I tell you, among the sons of women there is none greater than John."

This tribute to their master pleased all the disciples of John. They nodded their heads and murmured:

"Aye, he has said it! Our master is greater than Moses or Elijah."

Jesus, hearing this, replied:

"There you are wrong, beloved of the Father; for the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John."

One of John's disciples looked up at Jesus and asked:

"Why do you say that, Master?"

"Because," answered Jesus, "John is afraid of God. He lacks the perfect love which casts out fear. Every one who loves is born of God and knows God. John talks too much about

judgment and damnation. In this he is no better than the Pharisees, who are actors and blind leaders of the blind. To enter into the kingdom of God, one must have no fear of Him."

A Pharisee pushed his way through the crowd and stared at Jesus. The Pharisee's name was Simon. He was a good man, but blinded by his many superstitions. He was afraid of God and boasted about it. Had not Moses said that a man ought to fear God? His favorite scripture was a line from the Psalms: "From my youth up thy terrors have I known with a troubled mind." Like all Pharisees, his outer garment was bordered with large tassels, and his fingers were cumbered with broad phylacteries —cubes of leather containing little scrolls of papyrus or parchment, on which were written texts from the Law. A large phylactery was bound under his turban and projected between his eyes.

"Master," said Simon, "a man ought to fear God. Man is sinful. God is righteous. Who may stand before God and live? He of His mercy has given us the Law. By that Law alone is a man justified!"

Jesus lifted up his right arm toward Simon and the group of Pharisees with him. His face, so tender and gracious to the repentant sinner,

was now stern and terrible in its white passion for truth. Even Simon shrank from the majesty of Jesus' eyes, flashing with an accusing scorn of all hypocrisy. There was a hiss of swords in his voice as he said:

"Oh, you Pharisees! You are like children in the market-place, complaining,

> " 'We piped to you and you would not dance,
> We lamented and you would not weep,'

For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a devil'; the Son of man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!' I tell you that you are blind, who cannot see that only the pure in heart have the vision of God."

Simon was ashamed of himself. He felt that Jesus was right and that he was wrong, and bowed his head before the truth that sounded like a trumpet in the words of the Galilean. But it was only for a moment; habit soon mastered Simon and returned him to his old traditions. Yet in that instant he saw the glory of God on the face of Jesus and hastened to make amends.

"Master," he faltered, "the truth is on your

lips. Come, sup with me to-night, you and your disciples, that we may have further talk on these matters."

Jesus changed toward Simon, as the sky changes after a storm. A deep radiance was on his face, as he answered:

"Simon, I will gladly sup with you. In the house of friendship, God is always revealed; for wherever men are gathered together in love, the Father is in their midst."

That night, as Jesus entered Simon's house, he felt a change in his host. Had Simon greeted his guest with a kiss, had he ordered a servant to wash his feet, he would have accepted these courtesies as a matter of course. But no sign of affection marked Simon's attitude toward Jesus. He was polite, formal, punctilious, but there was no warmth in his welcome. Simon was again the Pharisee, playing his part before his friends, who were determined to trap Jesus and make him a laughing-stock before his disciples.

Then a thing happened which gave Simon a chance to humiliate Jesus: A woman, bearing an alabaster flask of ointment, entered the supper-room. A whisper of words, like the stir of leaves, greeted her:

"The Magdalene. . . . Harlot. . . . Un-

holy. . . . Put her out. . . . No, let her stay and see what happens. If Jesus is a prophet, he will denounce her, like the Baptist."

Mary of Magdala cared not for all these words. Her eyes were turned toward Jesus, her beautiful, haggard face luminous with the glory of her adoration.

Her life was wrong. Unhappiness in love had sent her away from a husband who had betrayed, abused, and shamed her. She had known Jesus in his boyhood, for she was none other than Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus and Martha. Mary was proud and her pride had almost destroyed her in a recklessness of living which had exposed her to gossip. And the more people spoke unkindly of her, the more she dared their spite. Then her neighbors of Bethany drew aside from her. All her old friends passed her by, until, storming at the meanness of people, she went away, trying to forget her sorrow in travel. But travel did not cure Mary of an inward rage which almost maddened her. She began to have spells of uncontrollable fury, so that people said of her that she had seven devils.

At length, in her wandering she came to Magdala. Here she had been living for several years, avoiding her old friends, and always

eluding Jesus, until one day he passed by her with his disciples. Something stirred within her, as though a voice called which she must answer. For several days she had followed Jesus, hiding in the crowd from his rebuking gaze. She knew that her old friend was aware of her. Resolutely, she tried to avoid his eyes; then one day she surrendered and followed Jesus to Simon's house.

Pride, anger, sorrow dissolved into tears that wet the feet of her friend, before whom she knelt in an abandon of repentance. She had failed life by blaming it when it had hurt her. She realized now that her greatest sin was self-pity. Oh, she despised herself for that, and shuddered as she wept.

A gentle hand touched her bowed head. The touch was so understanding, so reassuring, that she felt deeply happy, calm, and peaceful. In gratitude, she dried her Master's feet with her hair, kissed and anointed them with the costly, delicate perfume in the alabaster flask which she had brought into the supper-room of Simon.

Simon could no longer restrain his gathering indignation, and said thickly:

"If this man Jesus were a prophet, he'd know the kind of woman who anoints him with the teasing perfume of a harlot's toilette!"

Quickly came Jesus' reply:

"Simon, I have something to say to you."

"Say it, Master," said Simon, with a sneer.

Giving no heed to Simon's insolence, Jesus continued, as he gently caressed the head of the still kneeling Magdalene:

"There was a money-lender who had two debtors; one owed him fifty pounds, the other five. As they were unable to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me, now, which of these will love him most?"

There was silence while Simon, pondering Jesus' question, answered:

"I suppose the man who owed most."

Jesus regarded Simon sternly. He hated malice, which he felt in his host's manner toward himself and Mary. He looked down at Mary, smiled, and said:

"Behold this woman whom you and your friends have so easily condemned. She loves me. You despise and hate me, because I will not accept your narrow way of life. When I entered your house, you did not think it worth your while to treat me as the least of your guests. You gave me no water for my feet, no oil for my head, no kiss for my lips; but she has washed my feet with tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them from her flask.

Now, because she has love in her heart—love that has been abased and betrayed—she is dear to my Father. . . . But you, with your malice and your sneers, belong to the outer darkness of Gehenna, with those who grit the teeth of anger and wail in their night of self-created fears."

CHAPTER XVII

THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

THE days that followed the supper at Simon's house marked an increase of authority in the words of Jesus. He was now fully aware of the danger that cast its deepening shadow over his path. He knew that the church of Jerusalem had decided against him, that in the end the clerical party would cast him out, if it could. His one hope of safety was the increasing friendliness of Galilee; but he had yet to try Judea—that stronghold of ecclesiasticism, which dared the wrath of Rome in defense of its ancient titles, privileges, and customs.

The Pharisees had joined with the Sadducees to undermine the dangerous influence of Jesus, the alarming spread of his liberal and heretical teachings. Impious man! . . . He did not even observe the holy days, and taught the people to regard themselves as the sons of God! . . . Aye, he must be stopped.

They made fun of his Galilean brogue, criticised his accent, describing Jesus as an uncouth fellow. Because he was friendly with unsavory people, the critics of Jesus questioned his mo-

rality and pandered to every gossip of Galilee and Judea. Was it not known that he was followed by a horde of beggars—lousy rascals of the wayside, thieves, drunkards, gluttons, prostitutes—even tax-collectors? Aye, the man must be stopped. . . . The prestige of the temple was at stake. . . . The man must be stopped!

All these things the Master knew. He was never deceived, from the day at Nazareth to the night in the Pharisee's house. Somewhere along his path, torture, shame, and death awaited him. Well, he had faced that in the wilderness. He had come to do the will of God, and if death was the will of God, he would die. But in the meantime there was much to do. The seed of the word was his for the sowing, and the fields were ready for that seed. With increasing joy, the Master went on his way, doing what he could to help Simon, Judas and the others see God as he saw Him.

He was always comforted by the understanding of John, and there were times when they took long walks together.

"I give them unto your keeping, dear John," said Jesus to his friend. "Teach them the way of love. One day they will find and follow it."

One of the hardest of Jesus' tasks was to keep

himself free from the entanglements of the little lovers who gathered about him. They were little because their love for him was only personal. Some liked him for his wonderful eyes; some for the music of his voice; and some for the haunting of his hands. Because these lovers were little, they hindered Jesus by their false enthusiasm, chattering and boasting about him, till the Pharisees, hearing their talk, smiled and said:

"I told you so! What can you expect but irregularity of life, from an impious fellow like this Galilean?"

One day, as he was teaching in a certain house, word was brought to him that his mother and brothers were outside, come to take him home. The Pharisees, who stopped at nothing, had succeeded in frightening Mary, Joseph, Judas, and even young James.

"Get him home," they had warned Mary. "He is possessed and is beside himself. If he continues, he will be crucified!"

Mary's heart nearly broke at the thought. Jesus crucified? . . . Ah, would God break faith with her? She had looked for a different reception of her son—all Israel at his feet—not this growing hatred on the part of the ec-

clesiastical rulers. She must get him home, hide him away.

The years had robbed Mary of her dreams, of her swift intuitions. In her tender concern for her son's safety, she forgot her promise.

When word came to Jesus of his mother's intention, he was wounded. He did not expect interference from his mother. . . . Joseph, Simeon, Judas, even James, might fail him, but surely not his mother!

Then Jesus tasted the bitter cup of loneliness for God. He shuddered as he faced the crowd who had heard of Mary's anxiety and waited for Jesus' reply.

Suddenly, in a deep, ringing voice that reply came:

"I have no mother, no brothers, no sisters, save among those who hear God and obey Him."

When Mary heard these words, she went weeping back to Nazareth. . . . Ah, God was hard! He had taken her beautiful son. From that day Mary never smiled, until her moment of understanding.

We shall never know fully how the disciples taxed their Master's patience. They were like children and he gentled them often; though

sometimes he was stern to the point of hardness.

Once, when they were crossing the lake, a sudden storm came howling at them from the hills, beating the water into waves so high that the sailboat was nearly swamped. Simon, as usual, had the tiller, and yelled at Jesus, asleep in the bow:

"Wake up, Master! We're sinking!"

But Jesus only turned over on his elbow and smiled drowsily at Simon.

"We're sinking, I tell you. We'll have to swim ashore," Simon repeated.

"Are you frightened, Simon?" said Jesus, standing up and leaning against the mast. "If you are so easily frightened by a storm, how will you face the world when I am no longer with you? Peace. Be still. Where is your faith?"

Simon was ashamed of himself when, a little later, the storm passed and they made good passage to Kheresa. He never forgot his Master's rebuke, though he covered himself, after Jesus was gone, by telling how the winds and the waves had been obedient to his word.

When they reached Kheresa, the disciples were welcomed by many friends. All were glad to see Jesus, whom they had known since the days of his boat-building under Zebedee at Ca-

pernaum. Word of his teaching and healing had long ago reached the people of Kheresa, and now, here was Jesus, come with his message. Perhaps he would heal their sick and raise their dead.

By this time, it was known that the wonderful gift of the Galilean Prophet was offered only to those who were worthy. The gift had its conditions. A man must have faith in God, before the Master could communicate his power. If the gift was bestowed on a sick child or on a deranged person, it marked the faith of some interceding love that asked only for another's good. Had not the Master said again and again, "Where two or three are gathered together in my spirit, sharing with me my faith in God, there will the power always be manifested"?

There were many in Kheresa who did not like Jesus, holding with the Pharisees that his works were of the devil. But these did not trouble the crowd gathered at the shore, when at last the boat, swinging into the wind, made fast at the wharf below the town.

As Jesus stepped ashore, a ragged, wild fellow rushed at him, screaming and foaming, threatening him with oaths and huge fists, urged on by those who hated Jesus.

"Go back to Capernaum," he howled. "We don't want you here. You trouble us. Go back! Go back!"

Then he heard the voice of Jesus:

"My brother, I am come to help you."

At this, the lunatic fell, crying and lamenting, at the Master's feet.

"No man can help me," he cried. "No man cares to help me. I am less than the beasts—less than the swine yonder on the hill. Send me to them. They at least are content with the taste of acorns and the sweet roots of grass. Take from me the tormenting gleams of light, and send me to the grunting swine."

"You are a son of God," answered Jesus. "Let no man rob you of that knowledge. Stand up, my brother, and take my hand."

The man looked up into Jesus' eyes and, seeing the tenderness of eternal love shining there for him, arose and clasped Jesus' hand.

At the touch of that hand, dignity covered him like a shining garment. He stood in his rags, royal as a king. He threw back his head and laughed, and Jesus laughed with him, saying:

"Return, my brother, to your house, and show how greatly God loves you."

When the crowd saw this, they shouted. The

herd of swine on the hill became frightened, and in their panic some of them fell over the steep precipice above the lake, and were drowned.

The superstitious swineherds in their anger cried to Jesus:

"You are destroying our swine. Go back to Capernaum. We don't want you in Kheresa!"

This was too good a chance for the Pharisees to miss. Mingling with the crowd, they took up the cry of the swineherds:

"We don't want you in Kheresa. . . . We don't want you in Kheresa. . . . Go back to Capernaum, you who cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub!"

The crowd, so fickle and unstable, changed from admiration to anger, joining in the cry:

"Go back to Capernaum . . . to Capernaum . . . to Capernaum. . . . Son of the devil . . . son of the devil!"

Angered by this cry, Simon thundered:

"You dogs of Kheresa, lay but a finger on my Master, and I will break your necks with these hands!"

This silenced the crowd. They knew the strength and sudden anger of Simon, who stood, like a rock, in defense of Jesus. There were many in the crowd who knew Simon and loved

him for his oaths, for his smiting fists, as well as for his quick, kindly heart.

Ashamed of themselves, they began to give way before him and said:

"Fisherman, take your prophet home. We'll not harm him, though he send a legion of devils into our swine."

Meanwhile Jesus had descended to the wharf and was entering the boat with the other disciples. Simon held his ground, chaffing the crowd, until the boat was ready to cast off. Then, with a good-humored swirl of his fist, he joined his companions, grumbling the while and saying to Jesus:

"Master, I don't like this running away from people. If you let them think you are afraid, they will resist you. What you need is a stout fist or a heavy club or a good sword."

As they hoisted sail and left Kheresa behind, Jesus answered Simon:

"Follow me, and I will show you how to catch men. Your way is an old way, Simon. It is the way of kings and captains. Man cannot be taken by force. He must be won by patient and believing love."

"But, Master," urged Judas, "you delay the kingdom by your gentleness. Here was a chance to convince the Kheresites. Why did you not

work a miracle by calling down fire on their heads, or by making the earth open to swallow them up, as Moses did to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? You who can heal the sick, give sight to the blind, cast out devils, and raise the dead, ought to be able to destroy your enemies. Take those Pharisees. If I had your power, I'd smite the whole pack of them with leprosy. That would teach them a thing or two!"

"Yes," said Simon, squinting at his sails and meeting a squall with the right twist of the tiller, "Judas has said it. It is what we all think, Master."

Here John looked at Simon:

"Did you say *all*, Simon?"

Then Jesus answered Simon and Judas:

"O perverse and foolish ones! How often must I forgive you? You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. See, the kings of the earth rule men by force. Will you follow them? If you are to be my disciples, you must have courage to dare with your love all the armed hatred and violence of the kingdoms of this world. My kingdom is of God. Will you not share it with me?"

With a deep-chested cry, Simon replied:

"Master, I will follow you to prison and to death."

"That you will, beloved of my Father, and friend of my soul," was Jesus' reply.

When the boat reached the wharf below Capernaum, a crowd was gathered along the shore. Word of what had happened at Kheresa had reached the good neighbors of Jesus' town, who never failed him, though Nazareth and Kheresa did. The glad welcome of the people of Capernaum cheered Jesus' heart.

As he passed through the crowd on his way to the town, a woman came and touched the tassel of his robe. She was ill of a hemorrhage that greatly exhausted her, and having tried all cures, decided to seek out the new prophet and healer of Nazareth.

But it was not easy for her to reach Jesus. The crowd pressed so closely together in their excited tribute of welcome to him that it was some time before she succeeded in working her way to the feet of the Master.

As she drew near to Jesus, she kept saying to herself over and over:

"I will not bother him with any word of my need. It will be enough to touch the tassel of his robe. That will make me whole . . . that will make me whole!"

At the touching of a tassel of Jesus' long,

white outer robe, the woman of Capernaum knew that she was healed. With a cry of joy, she fell on her face, as Jesus, stopping, said:

"Who touched me?"

Simon laughed:

"What a question, Master, when people are all about you!"

"But this was a different touch, Simon. Love and faith have touched me."

Turning and seeing the woman, Jesus stretched forth his right hand to her and said:

"Daughter, arise. Your faith has made you whole!"

And the woman took Jesus' offered hand, arose, and said:

"Lord, I greatly thank you."

"Thank God, my beloved," was Jesus' reply. "He has healed you. Worship Him."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SONG OF ETHAN

Going on from the place where he had landed with his disciples, Jesus entered Capernaum. He was returning in triumph, though Nazareth and Kheresa had rejected him.

The multitude that thronged about him were excited over the healing of the woman, and watched for other manifestations of his divine power. They did not have long to wait. As Jesus approached the town, Jairus, the presiding rabbi of the local synagogue, met him with tears and lamentations.

"Master," he cried, as he fell at Jesus' feet, "my little daughter is dying! Come and save her!"

Jesus stood looking down at Jairus and said:

"Do not humble yourself before me, my brother. Your daughter will live. Have faith in God."

Taking Jesus' hand, Jairus said:

"Master, because I have faith in God, I come to you, His prophet. God is in you. Whatever you say, He will do. Save my daughter."

"God is in us all, Jairus. If you know Him in yourself, He will reward you openly."

"That I believe, Master; but still my faith

is only a gleam in the darkness of my poor understanding, whereas yours is the light of all the world."

"Jairus, according to your faith God will be manifested in you."

"Master, I believe that you are the Messiah of God. Come and save my daughter."

When Jairus called Jesus "Messiah," many in the crowd began to mutter and draw away, nodding their heads at one another, and saying:

"Who is this that accepts the crown of the Lord's Anointed?"

But others crowded still closer to Jesus, shouting:

"Hosannah to the son of David! He is King of kings, and Lord of lords!"

Meanwhile, a friend of Jairus came and said to him:

"Do not trouble the Master any further. Your daughter is dead!"

With a breaking cry, Jairus began to beat his breast; but Jesus, putting his hand on Jairus' head, comforted him.

"Do not weep, my friend. God is your Father. Have faith in Him, even unto death. Your daughter is not dead. Come, take me to her."

Dazed, weeping, hoping, struggling to obey

Jesus, Jairus led him up the main street of Capernaum to his house, that stood near the synagogue which Cornelius had built. As Jesus entered the house, he was surrounded by the professional mourners, already at their dismal task. Sternly he rebuked them.

"Stop your noise," he commanded. "The maid is not dead. She is only asleep. I know this image of death, and have learned how to destroy it."

Irritated at Jesus' words, the mourners stopped their droning and began to laugh among themselves:

"Hear him! As though we did not know death, who make our living among the dead."

"Depart, you vultures!"

The voice of Jesus was like thunder along the shore of Capernaum.

The mourners shrank before the blazing eyes and the quivering, lifted hands of the young Galilean. Again he faced the last great enemy and remembered the oath of his boyhood at the tomb of Simeon. How easily men surrendered to death! Well, in his time he would destroy the great illusion. Now he would challenge its counterfeit. Charged with the sense of the soul's eternity, conscious of the life that still lingered in the beautiful body of the daughter

of Jairus, Jesus took her hand and said gently:

"Little girl, arise!"

There was a stillness, as though the breath of every watcher was held. The hired mourners peered through the door and the windows with starting eyes. Would what happened at Nain, happen in Capernaum? Who was this man, who had such power over the dead?

"See! The color is returning to her pallid face. . . . Her staring, upturned eyes are looking at the Master! . . . The white, drawn lips are now as a laughing rose! . . . She breathes! . . . She speaks! . . . God, a miracle—a miracle! . . . Who is this that raises the dead? . . . Messiah! Hosannah to the son of David! Hosannah! Hosannah!"

The uproar that followed the recovery of the daughter of Jairus embarrassed Jesus. He shrank from this kind of publicity. He who had come to set men free from the illusion of fear, asked of men only the discovery of their inward life with God. So, after a hasty supper in Simon's house, Jesus with his disciples left Capernaum.

That night they slept on the hill beyond Capernaum, above the road to Bethsaida, under the tree where Jesus had first opened his heart

to Simon, Andrew, James, and John. Early the following morning they breakfasted together and went on their way to Bethsaida, where Jesus rested in Philip's house.

The people of that town soon heard that the Master of Galilee was in their midst, and began to fill the street and the courtyard of Philip's house, clamoring for a word from the prophet and healer, saying:

"Come forth, Jesus of Nazareth. Here are the sick and the lame. Come forth and cure them."

Jesus appeared at the parapet of Philip's house and said:

"You who have faith in God, be whole. Throw away your crutches. Open your eyes and see. If God cares for the sparrows, will He not also care for you? I am come to tell you that now are you the children of God. All that He has is yours. Therefore, be healed, and come to me, you weary ones, and I will give you rest."

When the crowd looked on Jesus, they loved him and greeted his words with cries of joy, commingled with the ecstatic words of the fortunate ones who had been healed.

All day long the people of Bethsaida gathered about Jesus, until at last he stole out of the town to a lonely, wind-swept hill, seeking rest.

But it was not given him; for the crowd followed him from Bethsaida, sitting in groups along the slope of the hill.

Seeing their hunger for his words, Jesus sat on a rock and began to teach the multitude about the kingdom of God. He told them that their names were written in heaven.

"Be not afraid of life," he said. "We are here to learn one lesson, and when we have mastered that, we shall be worthy of our Father's house. This is the lesson: Love one another. Set your heart against the hatred of the world, and overcome that hatred with your love. Love is the power of God; it will overcome the sins of the world. Have faith in love. Let nothing tempt you to call your brother a fool. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Be reconciled with your brother. When you pray, say, Our Father, blessed be Your name in our hearts. May Your kingdom be always there, that Your will may be done as well on earth as it is done in heaven. Give us daily the bread of the living word, and forgive our faults, as we forgive the faults of others. Strong in the power of love, may we resist the temptation of hate, that Your kingdom, Your power and glory, may be forever ours."

While Jesus was speaking, Simon rudely in-

terrupted him, pulling at the Master's sleeve and saying:

"Send the crowd off to lodge in the villages and farms around and get provisions there, for here we are in a desert place, and the evening is already on."

Jesus looked at Simon. Simon was always interrupting. Would he never understand?

"Give them food, if you can, Simon," he said.

Simon answered roughly:

"Master, here are some five thousand mouths, and you ask me to fill them! Am I Elijah to work a miracle on our basket of bread and fish?"

Here Philip broke in:

"That's all we have, Master—five loaves and two fish; barely enough for ourselves. Simon is right. Send the people away or they'll faint by the roadside."

Jesus, seeing an opportunity to illustrate his teaching about the kingdom, said to Philip:

"Let me have the basket."

Philip turned and called to Simon's son, who, proud of his importance, came running with the basket, and gave it to Jesus.

All eyes were on Jesus. Many had heard Simon, and wondered why the Master had

stopped talking. They cupped hands to ears and strained to catch the words that passed between Jesus, Simon, and Philip. When they saw the boy running to Jesus with a small basket, they began to whisper among themselves:

"Will he feed us with that? . . . I could eat the bread and fish myself, and still be hungry. . . . Hungry? I am as famished as the lean cows of Joseph's dream. . . . Silence! He'll work a miracle. . . . A miracle? No. . . . Yes, yes! Does he not heal the sick and raise the dead? . . . Did he not change water into wine? . . . He did not! . . . Yes, he did. . . . Who told you he did? . . . Simon. Who? that big, loud-mouthed fellow, who interrupted the Master? I'd never believe him. He's the kind that always decorates his facts. A gift for talking, he has, and likes to use it whenever he can. . . . Well, I'm hungry, anyway."

Jesus took the basket from Simon's son, standing proudly at his Master's side. With careful, reverent hands, Jesus lifted the fresh, green leaves covering the food, and spread them on the rock. He laid the loaves and the fish on the leaves, blessed them, and said:

"Father, hallowed be Your name. Give us this day our daily bread."

The entire multitude stood gazing at the rock. Many looked to see a miracle. They were in the mood to expect anything from the Master of Galilee.

Simon and Judas nodded to each other.

"The hour is at hand," Judas whispered.

"Aye, now the true Messiah appears. That was a fine touch of mine, Judas. I put a miracle up to him, and he's accepted the challenge."

"And the kind of miracle the people can understand, Simon. The man who can multiply bread at his word will rule the world."

Jesus took a loaf of bread and broke it, saying:

"Beloved ones, if I could multiply this food so that your hunger passed, and there was still enough left to fill twelve baskets, would you be satisfied? Man shall not live by bread only but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. His words are the living bread which comes down from heaven to satisfy the soul. That bread is mine to give you. Take, eat, and live forever."

A change came over Simon. He began to see into the heart of Jesus. He knelt before him, crying in a loud voice:

"Master, Master, I'm a poor fool. I always misunderstand you. You are the Bread of God!"

The multitude bowed at these words and shouted:

"Jesus is the Bread of God!"

The mountains echoed that cry, flinging the words far down the valley toward Bethsaida:

"BREAD OF GOD. . . . BREAD OF GOD. . . . Bread of God!"

Twilight had deepened into purple darkness. The dome of heaven, pillared by the mountain peaks, palpitated with its glory of stars that gathered and shone upon a tall, white figure standing on a rock above a multitude of men, women, and children, who lifted adoring hands to the music of benediction which fell from the Master's lips:

"Come, you blessed of my Father. Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. I was hungry and you gave me bread. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was naked and you clothed me; sick and you comforted me; in prison and you visited me."

After the multitude had departed, Jesus slept on the mountain, and the next morning went on his way through the beautiful valley of the Jordan to Cæsarea Philippi.

His time was at hand, and he knew it. Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John the Baptist,

now regarded Jesus with dismay. His conscience troubled him. Filled with superstition, he believed John would torment him through Jesus. . . . Well, having killed the master, he would now slay his disciple. He laid his plans accordingly, and sought an occasion to arrest Jesus.

But Jesus avoided Herod by travelling with his disciples to Cæsarea Philippi. It was a two days' journey through a country of changing scenery. He could see the peak of Mount Hermon lifted in white splendor above the mountains of Palestine. Jesus, the highlander, looked with joy upon the snow-capped peak, remembering a song which his mother had taught him in his boyhood. As he went on, he sang it:

"The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine:
As for the world and the fulness thereof,
Thou hast founded them.
The north and the south thou hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.
Thou hast a mighty arm:
Strong is thy hand,
And high is thy right hand.
Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne:
Mercy and truth shall go before thy face."

Singing always released the power of Jesus. In his hard moments, music comforted him.

And this was one of his hardest moments; for now he faced ultimate defeat. The animosity of Herod and of the temple rulers, the failure of his friends to understand him, depressed him, and he was heartened by the song of Ethan the Ezrahite.

CHAPTER XIX

A NIGHT ON MOUNT HERMON

During their walk to Cæsarea, Jesus probed the hearts of his disciples. They had been with him for some time. Could they go on without him? He was not concerned with outward things. The kingdom would come without pomp; it would come like a thief in the night. When men were least expectant, God's kingdom would come. How? By the rule of love in human hearts.

"I have called you friends," he said, as they went on together. "When I am gone, go into all the world and preach love to men."

Here Judas frowned and said:

"What do you mean, Master? I don't like to hear you talk about leaving us. You can't leave us. We can't do anything without you."

Jesus did not reply, and for a time there was silence, until he suddenly raised this question:

"What do people say of me?"

Nathanael answered:

"That you are John the Baptist; though some say you are Elijah or an incarnation of one of the old prophets."

"But what do you say of me, Nathanael?"

Before Nathanael or the others could reply, Simon spoke:

"You are Messiah, the Anointed of God!"

"Tell this to no man, Simon," said Jesus.

"Why, Master? My heart will burst if you lay this silence on my lips. Let me rather go into all the world and tell men the good news —Messiah is come! They will hear, they will come from the four corners of the earth to greet you; for men are lonely for God and will find Him in His son."

"Simon, Simon, one day men will call you the Rock, and on your name they will build a temple; but first you must be baptized with blood and the agony of a great sorrow. Satan has desired to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, and after I have been delivered to the priests and scribes, you will recover and be my disciple indeed."

"Master, I do not see into your words; they fall about me like spray from the waves that break along the shore. I only know that I love you, and will follow you to prison and to death."

Here Judas spoke angrily:

"I do not like this talk of death. Master, you cannot die. You are Messiah. I have jeopar-

dized my name by following you, believing that in His Son, God will keep faith with Israel. You are that Son—God's only begotten Son. All power in heaven and on earth is yours, and against it the gates of death shall not prevail. What I do not understand, Master, is your refusal to manifest that power. Last night, you had a chance to announce yourself with a real miracle. Did you seize it? No. All you did was to give us vague words about the Bread of God. Men do not want words; they want results. Why don't you give them results? There are times when I am tempted to leave you, and I would, did I not love you for your own sake."

Judas began to cry and embraced Jesus with the arms of love, saying:

"Though you were not Messiah and only a man like me, I should love you to the death, my sweet friend, my beloved one!"

As Judas wept in Jesus' arms, the Master, caressing him, said:

"Judas, if you would be my disciple, you must disown yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. If you would save your life, throw it away; for whoever loses his life for my sake, shall find it again. What will it profit you to gain the world and lose yourself in the gaining?

If you are ashamed of me and of my words, I will be ashamed of you. Be patient, beloved friend. Follow me; trust me. In this world you shall have tribulation, but cheer up! I am overcoming the world."

Later that week, Jesus left Cæsarea and, taking with him Simon, James, and John, climbed Mount Hermon till they gained one of its spurs.

Jesus beheld the fulness of the Promised Land. Once again the old dreams returned to him, and he remembered how he used to sit on the hill beyond Nazareth, dreaming of battles fought by heroes on the plain of Esdraelon. But his thoughts soared above these ancient conflicts. Now he knew that a greater battle was before him, who had to fight, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers of a spiritual darkness that had too long enveloped the world. He had been tempted many times to turn aside from this battle. Simon, Judas, their comrades, his mother and brothers, had been among his most dangerous tempters, but he had resisted them all.

Thank God for John! He had understanding and knew his Master's heart. If only he could make Simon forget the sword, and Judas,

magic—but one day they would see with John's eyes. Then how the world would laugh and sing!

Meanwhile, the powers of darkness were gathering. They would not yield to him without one final, desperate struggle. That struggle was near. In a few days he would set his face toward Jerusalem and challenge his hour by putting love to the test of the cross. The cross? There was no doubt of that inevitable agony. But why the cross? Because love must submit to hate. Had he not made that the burden of his message to men?

More than the death of hate was involved in this last struggle; death itself must go. Death was the final defense of hate. Men were terrified by death. It meant either oblivion or an uncertain lingering of the soul in Hades or Paradise, till the summons of the last trumpet. If one could only conquer death by showing it to be the great illusion! Could he? He must try. He must meet hate's final attack with a song of love upon a cross—a cross would lift him high above hate, until men would behold him and understand that there is no death, because death is the shadow of hate. Love, in destroying hate, would conquer death. What a resurrection! Did he not know that he was one

in a sequence of the anointed sons of God? He had to keep faith with those sons—men like Moses and Elijah; then, in their order, others would keep faith with him.

The face of Jesus began to shine with a heavenly light—a light that communicated itself to his long, white robe. His hands were clasped over his knees, his feet rested on the mountain moss where he sat with his friends.

"Look," whispered Simon to John, "what glory is on his face!"

John murmured:

"It is the glory which lights every man who comes into the world! His very garment glistens. . . . Hush, he is talking to some one."

"Aye," said James in a low, shaking voice, "he is talking to God!"

"No," answered Simon, "he's not. He's talking to Moses and Elijah!"

John knelt and said:

"Be still, my brothers. This place is holy ground. The Infinite draws near to talk with men. The veil of the invisible world is parted. . . . I did not know how near that world is. . . . See, it is all about us. . . . Simon, James, you too are glorious. The light is now covering us. Now are we like our Master, for we are seeing him as he is—God's highest Son! So high,

that from now on we shall think of him as the eternal Man from the right hand of God!"

Simon breathed stertorously. His head dropped, his eyelids closed, as he stammered:

"My God! This is too much for me. I am not worthy to be near him. I am a sinful man —a sinful man."

He fell prone, weeping:

"Oh, my God! This glory is too much for me—too much for me!"

James fell forward on his face, while John, kneeling, bowed his head, saying:

"Woe is me! I am undone. My eyes behold the glory of God in the face of my friend—my friend and Master, Jesus!"

He closed his eyes. The peace of heaven was in his heart. Fear fell from him. Jesus was his brother. Let him never forget that—his brother, however high and holy. Jesus was the first sheaf of the harvest of God gathered where Adam had sowed.

But what were these mysterious words passing between Jesus and his celestial visitors? Like the circling of the stars they were for light, and as the sound of the springtime when the blossoms are on the vines or filling the orchards with their odors. That was it—the words that passed between Jesus and the Pres-

ences had the happiness of springtime, when men forget decay and death, thinking only of life and its unfailing resurrections.

Uncertainly, but sufficiently, John gathered, in that mysterious hour of Jesus' transfiguration, this truth: His friend was laughing at death—laughing like one who had annihilated it; like one who was himself the resurrection and the life! He heard words about a cross. That he did not understand. Surely Jesus could never die! . . .

This much he learned: Soon his Master would submit to an awful test—a test so terrible that the powers of darkness would be shaken and dispersed. Then the reign of God would come in the hearts of men; then death would be swallowed up in victory. . . . Pondering this mystery, John nodded and slept, with the contentment of a sleepy child.

When the morning star waned in the sky, a bird came and sang to Jesus and his friends.

Simon was the first to stir. He turned, yawned, rubbed his eyes, and sat up. He looked and saw Jesus asleep on the moss, with John dreaming at his feet. Near him lay James with face upturned and reckless of the dew that glistened on his beard.

The flush of the dawn was in the sky. How lovely was the world! How peaceful, how good, how holy the hills! God was everywhere —on earth, in the sky. He would never doubt God. Though God put him to the utmost test of faith, as he had put Abraham, he would not falter. Aye, he must now be a rock of courage and faith, worthy of a Master who could go in and out of heaven at will! . . .

Simon stood up. Out came his knife from the leather strap of his tunic. . . . Here was plenty of wood. Soon he was whittling away. Striking flint and blade together, he blew gently on the tiny spark consuming the shavings, until a fire crackled beneath the twigs. With water from his flask and meal from a basket, he kneaded the cakes for breakfast and had them baking on the coals, supported by green branches held on crotches above the savory heat.

James and John still slept as Jesus arose and approached Simon, who was bending over the fire. Simon looked up with a quiet laugh:

"Lord, how good it is to be here! Let us stay on this mountain. I will make a shrine for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. They will come again, and here we shall call the world together in a great brotherhood of loving hearts."

Jesus answered:

"Not yet, Simon. The way before us is a hard way, and when I am taken up, you and the others must go into all the world with my gospel. But do not be afraid. I will be with you till the world is won for God. . . . Come, the cakes are ready. Call James and John. We must eat, and then we go up to Jerusalem, where all things which the prophets have said concerning me shall come to pass."

CHAPTER XX

AT THE WELL OF SYCHAR

From the night of his transfiguration, Jesus went on his way without faltering. He had made a decision and moved toward his destiny strong, quiet, tender, and full of understanding. He saw with clearer gaze into the labyrinthine soul of man, reckoned with its many windings, and prayed for that day when all its crooked trails would be turned into the broad highway of God. He set no time-limit on the coming of the kingdom:

"No man knows the hour. I do not. The angels do not. Watch. Be ready. On a day, near or far, God will be revealed in the fulness of man's soul. It will be like this: Two women shall be turning the mill, grinding the barley into meal; one of them shall know, the other shall not know. Watch. No one can tell when the day of God comes."

We must rid ourselves of the popular interpretation of the Master's teaching about the kingdom of God. This interpretation was derived from the apocalyptic notions current in his day. Even John, the Belovéd, could not rise

above those notions; and for all his genius, Paul, too, was enmeshed by them. This explains the inevitable deification of Jesus. Men divinized him through the sheer necessity of accounting for the height of his thought as compared with the thought of the wisest and holiest men of his time.

Now we are beginning to see the reason why he stood so high above his fellows: In daring to become God, he became God. How? By the purity of his love and the selflessness of his thought, he came at last to the majesty of divine thinking. He no longer needed the opinions of men, who had attained oneness with God.

When Jesus descended the mountain with his three friends, the cross was no longer a speculation; it was a fact without which his life would be incomplete. Communing with two masters, Moses and Elijah, Jesus pierced, with an Olympian gaze, the depth of man's need of love.

This need had been dramatized, through all the centuries of religion, in the rituals of sacrifice. The bull, the ram, the dove, bleeding at some altar, were symbols of love purified by fire. Human love was too mixed with selfish emotions, for man to rise with it to the contem-

plation of God. So, with a bleeding heart—not his own—man appeared before the Eternal.

Yes, man needed love—love in human form, no longer symbolized by the wounded heart of the bleeding bull, but love in reality, made historical in a life that finally gathered itself together for the supreme moment of its utter giving.

Jesus chose the cross. He chose it, that he might convince men that pure love is the only way to God. By pure love, he meant undivided love—love for all things.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," said a prophet before Jesus, who understood this saying to describe what he meant in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To be pure in heart, man must have in his soul no anger, no hatred, no malice.

With the vision of God, Jesus saw that men must touch this kind of love in a human life sanctified and made immortal on a cross!

At the bottom of Hermon, where the road winds from Damascus to Cæsarea, Jesus was met by the clamor of a multitude gathered about a boy afflicted with epilepsy. Judas, eager to demonstrate the healing gift of his Master,

had vainly tried to effect a cure. Even Nathanael had failed. As a result, the people of Cæsarea were beginning to hoot and jeer at Jesus, saying to the disciples:

"Your Master is not a healer. Our rabbis work cures in the name of Solomon. If your Master were Messiah, his disciples would do miracles in his name."

Judas clenched his fists in anger, and walked away, muttering:

"What they say is true. If Jesus were Messiah, I could do his works. I have failed, because he cannot or will not communicate his power. Yet, I have left all for him. What has he done for me? He has failed me!"

From that hour, Judas began to harden his heart against Jesus. Judas, more than Thomas, needed proof of spiritual reality. It was not because he did not love Jesus that he demanded proofs, but because his was a mixed love—the imperfect love which was so much in the way of his Master, and for which that Master must die.

Coming upon the jeering Cæsareans, Jesus inquired the cause of the noise. At once, there was silence. Many were ashamed of themselves, but not a few were merely curious to see if the Master could do what his disciples could not.

Jesus turned and saw the boy in a fit, heard the lamentations of his father, measured the discomfort of the disciples—even of Judas, who was now sitting on a rock, one fist propping his chin as he frowned and stared away over the mountains.

Turning to the boy's father, Jesus asked:

"How long has your son been like this?"

Still weeping and smiting his breast, the man replied:

"From childhood. He has a devil that throws him into fire and water, to destroy him. Master, your disciples can do nothing for him. Can you?"

Jesus looked at the boy's father so steadily that the eyes of the other faltered and turned away. The man read rebuke in the Master's gaze, that laid bare his doubt. He was ashamed of himself, and knelt at Jesus' feet, crying:

"Lord, I was wrong. Forgive my doubt. I believe in you even as I doubt. So cast out the devil and give me my son. I love him, Master. He is my only son. I want him to be like other boys, playing, laughing, and coming to me for pennies. The devil shuts him out from my love. Oh, give me my son—my only son!"

Then Jesus said:

"Friend, your love is greater than your

doubt, and by that love I will restore your son. See, how quiet he is. The devil no longer troubles him. . . . Come, little boy. Your father is calling to you. Get up. Run to him. You are well. Now you shall know laughter, happiness, and the beautiful joy of life, and always about you, the comforting love of your father."

Even as Jesus spoke, the boy stood up, looked at Jesus, then ran laughing into his father's arms.

When they had left Cæsarea, Judas approached Jesus and said:

"Master, why couldn't I cast out the devil from the boy? Why do you withhold your power from us? We have followed you without thought of ourselves. We have obeyed you in all things, and yet we are not able to do what you do."

Jesus replied:

"Judas, all power is given to the pure in heart. You are not pure in heart. Your love is mixed with selfish motives. You want to do wonderful things, in order to attract men. You must learn not to let your left hand know what your right hand does."

"How can one lose himself, Master?"

"By fasting and prayer, Judas."

"Master, if fasting and prayer is the way to power, why do not the Pharisees heal the sick, cast out devils, raise the dead?"

"Ah, my too-literal Judas! Prayer is more than words, and fasting more than going without food."

"Master, I don't understand you. You always cloud your thoughts with words," answered Judas, as he moved away, muttering: "What does he mean? . . . What does he mean?"

In time, Jesus passed through Capernaum and went on through Samaria. Resolved to escape Herod, he left Galilee as quietly as he could. That fox should not catch him. He had a thing to do, and Herod must not prevent it.

One day, he stopped at Jacob's well, near the village of Sychar. It was noon, and he was hungry and tired. He wanted to be alone, so he sent the disciples to Sychar for food. As he rested under the shadow of a palm that grew near the well, a woman came down the road, bearing an empty water jar on her shoulder. She was tall, slender, dark, and lovely of face.

As she drew near to the well, Jesus called to her:

"My sister, when you have filled your jar, give me a drink."

The woman looked at him swiftly and said in an airy tone:

"Why should I give you a drink?"

"Because I am your brother."

"You are not. I am a Samaritan, you are a Jew."

"In heaven there is neither Jew nor Samaritan."

"There'll be no Jews there, I tell you."

"Why?"

"Because they do not worship God after the manner of my fathers."

"Is God as small as that?"

"Who are you to talk to me about God?"

"Your brother."

"You play with words!"

"I do not. If you knew me, you would ask me for a drink."

"Foolish one! How can you give me a drink? You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

"Ah, but not so deep as my well."

"Your well? It's too far away in Galilee. . . . You are from Galilee, for you talk like a Galilean."

"My well is in every heart."

"In every heart? That's a pretty notion. You talk like a minstrel. Now I begin to understand

you, my universal lover. I know that kind of well, and many a mouth have I satisfied. . . . Still, I must say that I am taken unawares at being sought by a Galilean Jew, even though he is tall, young, and handsome."

Her words ended on a giggle, as she eyed him with a new interest.

Jesus sat quietly under the tree and smiled up at her as she drew near and touched his hair.

"Lovely hair!" she murmured. "Like russet apples. . . . Eyes, you are wells of water containing the sky. . . . Lips, you are like pomegranates, cut with a knife of ivory!"

She faltered. Her voice failed. Suddenly she knelt before Jesus and whispered:

"O my Lord!"

Then Jesus spoke to her:

"Be not afraid, beloved of my Father. The hour is coming when the world will know that God is too great to be imprisoned in temples. He is Spirit, and all who have love in their hearts will know Him and call upon His name. I am come to make this known to men. Every heart is the well of God, more sacred than this well or the pool of Siloam. Love is the living water, and who tastes it shall never thirst. Go now, my beloved, to your brethren and make known His gospel. Now are you my disciple."

But the woman, covering her face with her hands, cried:

"I am unclean. I have abandoned my body to the will of men. I have betrayed the holy gift of motherhood, and am not worthy to be your disciple; for now I know you, Jesus of Nazareth—the great prophet and healer. Ah, my blinded eyes deceived me! I should have known you, but I did not."

Her tears began to fall, her body was shaken with her sobbing. Then, with a wail of despair, she cast herself at Jesus' feet.

Rising, he bent toward her and lifted her with his strong, gentle hands, saying:

"Do not weep. Your sins are forgiven. You are holy in my sight. Go now and begin to give to others what you have so freely received—the love of God!"

The woman looked into Jesus' eyes and suddenly laughed:

"No man ever spoke to me as you have spoken. . . . Lord, you are the Messiah which was to come. You have opened my eyes to the beauty of God and man. I will serve you. I will speak your words, think your thoughts, and do your deeds."

"Go, my sister, and the peace of God be with you. We shall meet again in that day when we

stand together in our Father's house. Heal the sick. Give sight to the blind. Cast out devils. Raise the dead. I shall always be with you. Go!"

At his word, the woman left the empty, upturned water jar and ran singing toward Sychar.

Jesus watched her as she ran. Then he turned, picked up the water jar, and with a cord that hung to a beam above the well, lowered the jar into the water, drew it up, and drank deeply from its dripping mouth.

When the disciples returned from Sychar, they found Jesus asleep under the tree. They stood and looked at him, Simon holding a jar of wine, John carrying a basket of fruit, Andrew a basket of barley loaves, while Judas looked ruefully at an empty purse. Quietly they spread palm leaves for a table-cloth, and when the food was laid thereon, Nathanael called:

"Wake, Master. Arise and eat, for all things are now ready."

At the sound of Nathanael's voice, Jesus sat up laughing. His laughter was so mirthful that even Judas forgot the empty purse, and for a time was again as a little child.

As they ate, Jesus told about the woman; and there was argument about her among the disciples.

Judas urged that in this Jesus wasted time:

"She'll go back to her sins, for all your tenderness. 'Like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion.' Master, you waste your time on her sort."

"Waste time, Judas? Let me tell you that the kingdom of God is like seed cast into the ground. How quietly that seed grows! Day and night, it pushes its way up to the light. Does the farmer interfere with the seed? He lets it grow in the dark, knowing that growth is slow. How much more patient must the sons of God be, fulfilling their Father's word! As a woman takes the mother-dough and buries it in three pecks of meal, so is the way of God with the souls of men. As the prophet said, 'Here a little, there a little.' . . . Come, we must be on our way."

Together Jesus and the disciples passed on through village and town, and as they went, the Master poured out the fulness of his heart. He spent one night in the house of Zacchæus, after a busy day in Jericho, where the people thronged about him, eager to see his beautiful face, to hear his musical voice, to follow through many a parable the charming play of his thought, and to be cured of their ills.

As he neared his hour, Jesus gave himself without stint. His tenderness, simplicity, understanding, adorned him like the jewels on the breastplate of the high priest, like the gems that blazed in the crown of Herod.

CHAPTER XXI

NEARING JERUSALEM

After a night in the home of Zacchæus, Jesus took the road for Bethany. As he went, his thought turned back to that day when, with Joseph and Mary, he had stopped at Simon's house. Many years had passed since that happy time, but to Jesus it was as yesterday.

How good it would be to see Lazarus, whose father had died of leprosy a year ago. Terrible disease! Would that he had known of it! But word of Simon's plight had not come to him till after his death, and with it news of the affliction of Lazarus. What a peculiar sickness —spells of fainting and long hours of a death-like state. All this had been told to him by Mary, whom he had healed and who was now home again in Bethany with Lazarus and Martha. Well, he would stay with his friends and heal Lazarus, before going on to Jerusalem.

Jesus sang as he walked a little ahead of the disciples, who for some time had looked

fearfully at the Master, wondering at his strange silence. Why was he silent? He was not sad. His face was aglow with an inward light which made John, James, and Simon remember the night on Mount Hermon. No, he was not sad; but he was absorbed in thought, though his face shone with the light of an eager joy—the joy of a runner nearing the goal to attain which he has outsped all his competitors.

When they drew near to Bethany, Martha met them in tears. She came running and sobbing to Jesus and fell at his feet, as she cried:

"Lazarus is dead! Lazarus is dead! Master, if you had come four days ago, our brother had not died."

Jesus stood looking down at Martha and said:

"Lazarus is not dead!"

Martha, looking up, her face wet with her tears, answered:

"Even though our brother is now four days in the tomb?"

"Arise, Martha. Only believe and you will see the glory of God in the eyes of your brother, who sleeps, but who is not dead."

As Martha arose, Judas said harshly:

"How can a man be four days in the tomb and live? Death has him, I tell you, and by this

time the body of Lazarus is loathsome. Back from the tomb, I say, for it hides the corruption of death!"

The other disciples nodded in agreement with Judas; but Martha, smiling, took Jesus' hand and said as they went on together:

"Master, I believe what you say. Though the bones of my brother are loosened by death, yet will he live; for in you is the resurrection and the life."

Jesus answered, with the quiet authority of one who believed that God had given him power to conquer death:

"He who believes in me will live, even if he dies, and no one who lives and believes in me will ever die. Go now to Mary and tell her I am come to Bethany."

Martha ran on ahead of Jesus into the village, calling as she ran:

"The Master is come. He is come to conquer death."

Her voice rang through the street of the village, reaching Mary, who sat with her head against the door of the tomb where the body of Lazarus had been laid. Her crying filled the place of the dead with a doleful sound, caught up by the mourners lamenting the death of Simon's son.

As Mary wept, she thought of Jesus. If only he had been near when Lazarus was ill! Would not he who had raised the man of Nain and the maid of Capernaum, have frustrated also the strange, deadly sleep of her brother? How his words had healed and restored her, sending her back to Bethany and the love of Martha and Lazarus. Thank God for that. She had returned in time to be with Lazarus before he died. . . . If only the Master had come, even on the day of her brother's death! But now it was too late. . . . Four days in the tomb. . . . Four days in the tomb!

Then came the music of Martha's song, stealing up the street to the place beyond the village where the cave of the dead concealed Lazarus.

At the sound of Martha's voice, Mary started and stood leaning against the door of the tomb, looking down the street along which her sister was running. She clutched at her throat, as though to stifle the sobs that still bubbled up from her broken heart. Her tear-drowned eyes were wide and staring, for beyond Martha she dimly saw the nearing majesty of Jesus. Instantly, her thought was only for him. Her brother was dead, but Jesus would give her courage and strength to bear her sorrow.

With a loud cry, Mary ran to Jesus and fell at his feet, once more washing them with her tears, as she mourned:

"Had you been here, Lord, my brother would not have died."

Jesus, bending over Mary, mingled his tears with hers, for he remembered the day that he had wept at Simeon's tomb on the hill of Nazareth; and now as he wept, he thought of all the sorrow of the world since Eve mourned over the dead body of Abel. Oh, terrible death! How it ruled over the earth! When would come the day of God, in which sorrow, tears, lamenting, should forever pass away? But it was for this that he had taken up the gauge of God, after John's sermon at the Jordan. It was for this that he was travelling with certain steps to the cross. He must not yield to death, not even to the extent of tears. Rather must he laugh into the face of death, which he had come to destroy.

Jesus drew himself up like an athlete ready for the contest. Proudly he threw back his head. Proudly his voice pealed like a trumpet:

"Roll back the stone from the tomb. Lazarus is not dead. Roll back the stone!"

Simon leaped forward and, seizing the great stone, heaved it with his mighty arms from the

door of the tomb. With a crash, the round stone rolled back in its groove, leaving the cave of death open to the eyes of the gazing, awe-swept crowd.

There was silence as Jesus approached the tomb. What would he do? They waited and wondered, some on their knees, some standing, and not a few with covered faces. They were afraid of death and shrank from the horror of corruption.

With a voice that echoed among the tombs, Jesus called to Lazarus:

"Come forth from this sleep of death!"

Through the wide doorway of the tomb, many in the crowd could see the white, swathed body of Lazarus lying on a stone slab in the dim light.

First there was stillness—the awful stillness of death, that seemed to mock the Master; then there was a little stir of the body, a tremor of one hand that somehow had slipped from its swathing.

"God!" whispered Simon, standing near Jesus. "You were right, Master, he's not dead. See his hand!"

"Loose him, Simon," said Jesus, "and bear him forth to his sisters."

Entering the tomb, Simon began to unroll the linen bindings from the body of Lazarus, while Mary cried:

"Our brother lives!"

Martha ran to him and tenderly helped Simon, till Lazarus lay, still sleeping, but free from the linen fetterings. Then Simon lifted Lazarus gently and laid him at the feet of Jesus, who again spoke:

"Lazarus, come forth from sleep. You are restored to life."

The eyes of Lazarus opened wide. He breathed deeply. He turned over and half-arose, leaning on his left elbow, facing the crowd. Then, with a laugh, he stood up and yawned, saying:

"What am I doing here, almost naked, at the door of a tomb?"

With a sob of joy, Mary flung herself at Jesus' feet, while Martha threw her arms about the shoulders of Lazarus, singing,

"This my brother was dead and is alive again;
He was lost and is found!"

That night there was rejoicing in Bethany. The village throbbed with singing and dancing and the clapping of hands. Bethany lay along the route of the pilgrims coming from Galilee

to keep the Passover, and among them were many of Jesus' followers, who had joined him after Jericho. As Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem, it was a convenient camp for those who were not able to sleep in the already overcrowded city.

Jesus stayed with Lazarus, who in the course of the evening told of a strange dream that he had had during the four days of his sleep.

"It was somewhat like this, Master: I had spent my father's money in rioting. Clothed in purple and fine linen, I fared sumptuously every day, indifferent to the needy—even to a poor man, bearing my name, who lay at the gate of my palace, full of sores which the dogs licked, and begging for the crusts and bones which I flung from my table. Then the darkness of death was on me, and I found myself in a deep abyss of flame. Oh, how parched was my mouth for a drink of water, and how I envied the man Lazarus at my gate, for he had had an occasional crust, while I had nothing but torment and the horror of loneliness.

"Then I looked up and saw the poor man in Paradise, that glittered beyond my gulf. He walked with Abraham and Moses and the prophets. He was no longer covered with sores. He was clothed in purple and fine linen, while

I was naked in the flames of Gehenna. Seeing him, I called across the gulf and said, 'Father Abraham, send Lazarus to touch my tongue with water.' And Abraham answered, 'Between us and you is a great gulf fixed, which you made when feasting on earth. We may not cross to you, you cannot cross to us.' Then I pleaded, 'I have five relatives, who are doing as I did. Send Lazarus to them, to warn them of their fate.' But Abraham answered, 'They have Moses and the prophets. If they will not heed them, neither will they hear the voice of one raised from the dead.' "

Looking at Lazarus, Jesus said:

"My brother, God has revealed this to you, and when I am lifted up, go forth and tell this story; for the time is coming when men will harden their hearts against the witness that I shall bear. Then will your word awaken them. Aye, though one rose from the dead, many will not believe."

During this conversation, Mary entered the room and sat on a rug at Jesus' feet, while Martha bustled about, giving orders to the servants, to the jingling of her keys that hung from a girdle of corals and silver bangles.

Martha was proud of her housekeeping, and liked to order the servants. Good of heart and

kind to all, she was inclined to be critical of people, and was fond of giving advice, even when it was not asked. She still had her opinion of Mary, whom she had taken back to the home in Bethany. Mary was so impractical and dreamy. Like all romantic people, she avoided responsibility in order to have time for dreaming. And here she was sitting at the Master's feet, leaving all the work to her! . . . So she grumbled and complained about Mary's laziness, and at last she said to Jesus:

"Master, speak to Mary and tell her to help me get supper ready for you and Lazarus."

Jesus looked at Martha and replied:

"Martha, you are troubled about things. Why? You have servants and my needs are few. Here you have both Mary and Lazarus back again, and now you are complaining about things that are not important. You are like the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son, who was angry at his father for killing a calf, and making a supper for him who had returned from a far country. The sin of the prodigal was great, but his brother's sin was the greater. Fault-finding is like calling your sister a fool, and to call another that is to deny her title as a child of God. In my Father's house there is room for you all. Let there be no division

among you, for you are all mine, whom the Father has given to me. Service is a good thing, but love is a better, and Mary has chosen it."

Martha bowed her head and wept, saying:

"Forgive me, Master. I am too hasty."

Then she sat with Mary and Lazarus at the feet of Jesus, who blessed them and said:

"Little children, love one another as I love you."

The following day, Jesus entered Jerusalem quietly. He would not let the disciples accompany him, for fear of the Pharisees. In answer to Simon's protests, he said:

"Fear not, Simon, my hour is not yet come. When that hour is at hand, we shall go into the city together. Meanwhile, watch and pray that you do not fail me in the time of temptation; for the day is at hand when even you will deny that you know me!"

At these words, Simon groaned and swore by the throne of God that he would never fail his Master.

All that morning, Jesus walked about the temple, watching the people, the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Concealed behind a pillar of the Court of Israel, he heard a Pharisee boast to God about his right-

eousness, thanking Him that he was not like other men, particularly that publican in the Court of the Gentiles, who smote his breast and called himself a sinner. He saw, too, a widow drop her mite in the collection, while a rich Pharisee stalked by, ostentatiously jingling a bag of silver that all might see the amount of his offering. And he heard the lowing of cattle, the bleating of lambs, the cooing of doves, held for sale in the outer court. He marked how the dealers overcharged the people, saw the money-changers cheating in their exchange of the temple coin for the silver and copper of Cæsar's currency.

He remembered his boyish anger and oath against the iniquity of the spiritual rulers of Israel. He had come to keep faith with that boy. The hour was at hand for the appearance of the messenger of the Covenant of God, coming with a fan in his hand to separate the chaff from the wheat, that the pure bread of God might again be broken to satisfy the hunger of the world.

CHAPTER XXII

HOSANNAH TO THE SON OF DAVID

AFTER another night in Bethany, Jesus called Simon and Judas aside and said:

"Go to Bethphage and await me there with an ass."

Simon roared in laughter at Jesus:

"It's only a mile from Bethphage to Jerusalem—why the ass?"

"Will you take the city of David on an ass?" said Judas contemptuously.

Jesus replied:

"So it is written by the prophet:

> "Tell the daughter of Sion,
> 'Here is your king coming to you,
> He is gentle and mounted on an ass.' "

Simon gazed dumfounded at Jesus. He could not understand the saying of Zechariah, and was puzzled at Jesus' choice of this conception of the Messiah as a meek and lowly king. Simon could never understand why Jesus persisted in refusing titles, honors, powers. In this he was like all the others, John excepted.

But Judas understood Jesus. He was too clever to miss the significance of his Master's teaching, and always did all he could to resist what he felt was a bit of fanaticism in Jesus. Strange that Judas, who greatly loved his friend, failed to go deeper into the heart of Jesus. We can only explain this failure by remembering how deeply rooted in the religion of Israel was the longing for a warlike king coming in the name of the Lord.

How did Judas continue to accept Jesus as the Messiah if he thought his method wrong?

The answer to this question rests on the fact that all the disciples, even John at first, ventured again and again to argue with Jesus concerning his policy of a non-resisting conquest of the world. We have already seen how naïvely these ordinary people lived with Jesus, loving, adoring, following him, and yet presuming to argue with him. It is one of the marvels of the story of man's great deliverance, that the companions of Jesus were not blinded by the awful radiance of his soul, but lived easily with him: a tribute to the unique personality of the Master. Aye, he never quenched a smoking wick nor broke a bruised reed!

It was in the plan of Jesus to meet the final issue of his ministry, as the lowly One. Only a

man like Jesus could have adopted such a rôle. Had John the Baptist entered Jerusalem for a final quarrel with the temple authorities, he would have come with thunder, shaking the city with its sound. Jesus, remembering the ancient prophecy of Messiah's advent, decided to fulfil it in himself.

As Simon and Judas went on their way to Bethphage, they grumbled and complained. Simon said:

"Judas, the Master bothers me. I love him, believe in him, but I don't understand him. What does he mean by riding into Jerusalem on an ass? The Romans will laugh at him. The priests will sneer. The rich will turn aside, and ignore him. This is not what I had dreamed of him. He who has such powers ought to stand on the Mount of Olives in a chariot of gold, and rock Jerusalem with his words. Instead, he proposes to appear before the temple on an ass!"

Judas smote his hands together and cried:

"I have it! I have it!"

"What, Judas?"

"No use telling you, Simon. You'll betray it to the Master. Oh, it's a great plan and it will work—aye, it will work."

Judas became silent and went on his way chuckling. He was radiant and drew himself

up proudly. In answer to Simon's teasing he only shook his head, saying:

"Wait and see, Simon. Wait and see!"

Later that morning, Jesus bade good-bye to Mary and Martha, and, taking Lazarus and the disciples with him, left Bethany for Jerusalem.

It was a beautiful morning. The grape-vines were heavy with their purple and amber fruit. The orchards were fragrant with ripening apples. The fields were yellow with melons, pumpkins, and squash that margined the billowing grain. The time was near for the song of the reapers, the grape- and apple-gatherers. Summer was ending, the harvest was at hand.

Along the mountain-roads wound an almost endless train of pilgrims, on their way to keep the Passover in the city of God. As they went, they sang beautiful old songs—the songs which Jesus had heard long ago as he led Dagon, bearing his mother, over the same road. This is one of the songs which the pilgrims sang that day, coming from Galilee with Jesus of Nazareth:

"When the Eternal brought the exiles back to Sion,
We were like men who dreamed;
Laughter filled our lips,
Shouts of joy were on our tongues;

The very heathen said,
'The Eternal has done great things for them.'
Yes, he had done great things for us,
And we rejoiced at it.
O thou Eternal, bring back now the rest of our exiles,
To fill us up, like streams in the dry south.
Those who are sowing in tears
Shall reap with shouts of joy;
Sadly they bear seed to the field,
Gladly they bear home the sheaves."

Did they know that in their midst was the first of the ripened wheat of God, ready to be offered in pledge of the coming harvest?

This much may be said of many of them: They knew Jesus and received him as the Messiah. When he had mounted the ass, brought to him from Bethphage by Simon and Judas, they began to spread their cloaks and broad palm leaves in the way, shouting:

"Hosannah to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

This cry was taken up with an increasing sound, as Jesus, descending the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, crossed the brook Kidron, and approached the city.

As the multitude swept by, shouting and waving triumphal palms, the Roman guard, at one of the gates, stared with heavy amazement. They muttered pagan oaths when Jesus rode

up, and called on Bacchus, Hercules, and Jupiter to witness this curious spectacle of a beggar king riding against the majesty of Tiberius!

Jesus recalled the day he had entered Jerusalem with his mother. He listened to the same songs, climbed the same cobble-paved road, twining and turning past gray walls, towers, and battlements. He was again in David's city. Resolutely had he kept faith with his boyhood's passion; for he visited Jerusalem but three times: once when his mother had brought him, once when he walked at Dagon's bridle, and now himself, riding on an ass. In his boyhood he had left Jerusalem with tears of anger; now he was returning with tears of pity. Yes, he was sorrowful and wept, saying:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! slaying the prophets and stoning those who have been sent to you. How often I would fain have gathered your children as a fowl gathers her brood under her wings! But you would not have it!"

What were his thoughts as he rode along? Lonely in the midst of many, how great was his courage, how certain his faith in the victory of love!

"Hosannah! Hosannah!" sang the multitude, but he did not hear that song, who was riding alone with God, meek and lowly on an

ass. He was looking into the years, measuring the task that was set before him. He was not impatient. He knew that time would approve his deed, that one day the children of earth would rise up and call him blessed.

When he came to the gate of the outer court of the temple, he gave the ass into Simon's care. Passing through the gate, he walked by the tables of the money-changers and the booths of the cattle-dealers, until he stood under one of the colonnades. Here was a stone pulpit where important announcements were called and speeches made. Quietly ascending the pulpit, Jesus stood and looked over the crowd thronging the pavement. The cries of the venders came to him, with the oaths and giggles of the multitude. Few noticed him. Who knew him? Who cared for him? Only the pilgrims of Galilee, who, when they saw Jesus, began to sing:

"Hosannah to the Son of David!
Blessed be he who comes in the Lord's name!
Hosannah in high heaven!"

This outcry lasted so long that many of the temple rulers entered, and soon the pavement was thronged. Who was this tall, golden man in a white robe; his flowing hair, like a lion's mane, crowned with a snowy turban?

Then the thunder of rebuking words rolled

through the court. At the sound of that voice and the majesty of those flaming eyes, even the priests quailed. Here was a king indeed. No lowly carpenter-peasant from Galilee, but a king—a mighty king. To many it seemed that an archangel had descended from heaven with the trumpet of doom, to make announcement of the day of God. Women fainted, children cried. Men looked fearfully at one another. A king indeed—the king of the Jews!

So great was the dread and awe of him, that confusion seized the money-changers. Their hearts were guilty. They had robbed the people of God, taking heavy discount from the pennies of the poor in exchange for the silver shekel. Ashamed, frightened, bewildered, they sprang from their tables, overturning them in their panic, so that copper and silver crashed musically together on the pavement. It was as though all the currency of Cæsar and Caiaphas were doing a devil's dance together before the accusing eyes of God!

Nor was this confusion confined to the money-changers; the cattle-dealers ran from their booths, and some of them left the gates of the stalls open. Panic was on the crowd, for the half-maddened cattle bellowed and broke from their stanchions. A great bull roared and shook

his horns, then raced along the pavement toward the outer gate, followed by a frantic herd. Vainly did the priests try to quell the mob of frightened people. With shrieks of terror, they scattered in every direction, avoiding the rush of the cattle, and cowered about the feet of Jesus, who still thundered:

"My Father's house is a house of prayer, and you have made it a den of thieves! Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, actors! You shut the gate of the kingdom of God in men's faces. You neither enter in yourselves, nor will you let those enter who would. Blind guides that you are, filtering away the gnat and swallowing the camel! You clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are filled with your greed and self-indulgence. You serpents! You brood of vipers! How shall you escape Gehenna?"

When word of all these things was brought to Caiaphas, he rubbed his hands gleefully and said:

"Now we have him! Now we have him! He has violated the house of God. Send and fetch him to me."

In a few minutes the temple guard returned with the report:

"We dare not seize him. He is surrounded by

the multitude. He is healing the sick, curing the blind. If we take him now, the people will turn against us."

Caiaphas clutched his long, white beard with jewelled fingers and frowned at the guard, as he replied:

"Well, there are other means at our command." He turned with a leer to a group of priests: "Is it not so, reverend fathers? Is it not so?"

The priests nodded and one of them said:

"We will go forth and tangle him with words. He's bound to break and commit himself."

"Go, my fathers," said Caiaphas. "Spare nothing to trap this man, that he may be delivered into our hands."

The priests found Jesus at the foot of the pulpit, with several children laughing on his knee. Their mothers stood near, proud of the honor, and talking intimately with him. He asked about their names, their ages, and places of birth, as though he had no other care but to find out these small matters from gentle mothers.

The priests were amazed. What kind of man was this who could thunder the money-changers and the cattle-dealers out of the temple,

and then sit with peasant babies on his knee?

Soon one of them approached Jesus and said smoothly:

"Good Master, is it lawful or not, to pay tribute to Cæsar?"

The other priests crowded together and craned their necks to catch Jesus' reply.

He looked up at the priests and answered:

"Call no man good. Only God is good. I am your brother. . . . Show me the tribute money."

The priest drew from his purse a denarius, and gave it to Jesus, who turned it over and said:

"Whose is this image and superscription?"

"Cæsar's," came the terse reply.

The priest glanced sideways at the others, who winked and sneered.

"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's!"

The voice of Jesus was no longer gentle. He stood, with the children still in his arms, facing the priests, while the crowd gathered to hear what he was saying. When they heard Jesus, they shouted:

"Never man spoke like this man! He is the Messiah of God. He has confounded the priests, for the word of truth is on his lips!"

Once again Caiaphas consulted the priests:

"And you gave him a denarius, and he said that? Well, here is another test: Take yonder woman who is accused of adultery and is condemned to be stoned in the outer court. Make a show of fulfilling the law and see if he will interfere. I think he will. . . . I think he will. If he does, we have him."

Bowing to Caiaphas, the priests went forth into the outer court, following the guard who dragged the frightened woman, all dishevelled and tearful, to the pillar of punishment. The pillar was hideous with blood-stains and stone-bruises. At its foot was a heap of cobbles used for the dreadful purpose of capital punishment. Hither the guard came and bound their victim by hempen cords to a bronze ring set in the pillar.

Wailing and struggling, the woman cried:

"Let me go, let me go! Why will you stone me, who are guilty of my shame? Will no one plead for me? Is there among you a man with courage to intercede for me?"

As she cried, Jesus came and stood by her, saying:

"Daughter of God, I will intercede for you."

The woman looked up and wailed:

"Ah, good friend! Would you plead for me?"

"For you, and all the world, my sister."

Jesus looked steadily at the priests and said:

"Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."

There was silence, save for the woman's sobbing, as Jesus knelt before her and wrote in the sand at the foot of the pillar, so that she might read them, these words:

"God is love."

When he arose, he saw the priests and the guard moving across the pavement to the inner court. A smile was in his eyes, and the edge of laughter on his words, as he said:

"Woman, where are your accusers?"

The woman looked up, and, seeing the priests going through the gate, replied:

"Why . . . why, no man has stayed to condemn me!"

And Jesus unfastened the bonds of her shame, lifted her to her feet, and said with infinite tenderness:

"Neither do I condemn you. . . . Go in peace."

CHAPTER XXIII

JUDAS OF KIRYOTH

After the defeat of Caiaphas, he and his priests began to plot Jesus' death. Their fury grew with each frustration of their malicious designs, and steadily they pressed with increasing duplicity toward the accomplishment of their purpose.

In the course of their deliberations, one of them said:

"Our only way is to find and feed discontent among his disciples. For several days I have noticed one of them who stands apart from the others. He appears to be troubled, and whenever he meets the gaze of Jesus, his eyes shift and turn away."

Sitting on his throne, and high above his clergy, Caiaphas regarded the speaker with approval. He was robed in his glittering vestments and wore a jewelled mitre that blazed with many colors. He was the incarnation of priestly power. The years had whitened his hair. His heavy eyebrows were like frost rimming deep

pools of cold fire. His face was that of the aristocrat and scholar. His beard curled down to a jewelled breastplate, and, as he listened, his long, nervous fingers clutched a blue stole enwrought with lustrous pearls.

Caiaphas was a religious opportunist, believing in the old fallacy that the end justifies the means. He looked for the day when the temple would be the political as well as spiritual centre of the world. Had not God made a promise to Abraham? How else would He fulfil that promise, save through the dignity of his throne —the seat whereon His earthly vicar sat? Men needed authority in religion. The Gentiles were in outer darkness. They did not have a covenant with God. Idolaters! They did not believe in God, but followed every idle whim of the flesh. Look at Rome. Surely that proud, evil city was tottering on the brink of damnation.

It lay within the power of the temple to save the remnant of the human race. Whatever threatened the authority of the temple was involved in this struggle between church and state. The devil had chosen Rome for his instrument, but God had chosen Jerusalem for His. The defeat of Rome was certain, was imminent. This Jesus of Nazareth was alarmingly in the way of the temple's victory over Rome.

John the Baptist had created a stir among the people. Well, as Herod had dealt with John, so would he, Caiaphas, high priest of God, deal with Jesus.

Caiaphas sighed. What a pity! If only he could have won the Galilean! What personality! What genius! What courage! No wonder that he had acquired such a hold on the people. It was too bad to destroy this young lion of the tribe of Judah. There was no help for it, however; one man must die, for the people's good. . . .

Caiaphas raised his head and spoke to the Sanhedrin. His voice was deep and carefully modulated. His accent was like hammers of gold on bells of silver. His words were chosen, as a woman chooses her jewels from their casket:

"Priests of the living God, the shadow of fate points to the death of Jesus. . . . The man is greatly good and full of wonders. There is no doubt that he is a prophet and has done marvellous things. But he resists our authority which is of God. As he himself has been reported to say, no man can serve two masters. The case is clear. Jesus must die, for the good of the people. Now, since it is not permitted to us to put him to death, we must involve Rome in the

matter. If we hand him over to Rome, his death will be laid at our door. What we have been told by our brother here is wise. Seek out the discontented disciple, and let him stand alone before me, that I may counsel with him."

Caiaphas struck a gong at his side, and dismissed the Sanhedrin.

That evening, as Jesus left the temple with his disciples, one of them was missing, and Simon said:

"Where is Judas? . . . We were to make ready for the Passover."

Jesus replied:

"He has gone to get the lamb for sacrifice."

They stood in the soft glow of the setting sun, and watched with pleasure its glancing rays turn the dome of the temple into molten gold. Then Simon said to Jesus:

"Master, what mighty stones support yon blazing dome!"

In a sad voice Jesus replied:

"Simon, the day will come when there shall not be left one of those stones standing upon another. The temple shall be destroyed, for in the City of God, the Brotherhood of Man, there will be no temple."

"What! No temple? How then will men worship God?"

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, Simon, will God be worshipped. But, come. Let us go to Bethany. To-morrow night the lamb shall be offered and broken for the sins of the world."

As Jesus and the disciples went on their way to Bethany, Judas stood before Caiaphas, who said:

"My son, I have called you for counsel."

"Speak, my lord. I am here to obey."

"You are Judas of Kiryoth?"

"I am, my lord."

"And you follow the man of Nazareth?"

"I follow and love him. He is the bright and morning star of Israel, the hope of the world."

Caiaphas smiled. He liked Judas for that. Here was a man of courage. He must handle him with craft . . . a fearless man and sincere. . . .

"The hope of the world, Judas? Surely you do not deny that here is the hope of the world —the temple of God?"

"He is the temple of God. In him dwells the fulness of God. I have followed him, my lord, and I know."

Caiaphas laughed.

"Foolish fellow! if that be true, then God

no longer dwells here. God cannot dwell in two temples at the same time. Come, let me put your faith in this Jesus to the test. If he is the temple of God, nothing can harm him. Deliver him to me."

Judas started back from the throne of Caiaphas, gazing on the high priest with wondering eyes. How had Caiaphas read his heart? This was his secret—the thing he had planned. Ah, God approved, was speaking to him through the lips of the priest! God wanted him to act, that His son might be manifested with power before men. . . .

Caiaphas, leaning forward, said:

"Man of Kiryoth, are you afraid?"

"I am not afraid. I will deliver my Master into your hands to-morrow night in the olive grove, after we have eaten the paschal lamb."

Caiaphas smote the gong that summoned the priests together. The curtains of the domed and pillared hall were parted, and the Sanhedrin entered and took their seats about the throne of the high priest. They waited for Caiaphas to speak, looking curiously at Judas, who, unafraid, stood proudly before them, returning look for look. He would show these priests a thing or two! They could not harm his Master. . . . But he must play his part and appear

before these men as a traitor. He and Caiaphas had a game to play, and play it they would.

After a pause, Caiaphas said:

"Judas of Kiryoth, how much will you take for Jesus of Nazareth?"

Without a quaver in his voice, Judas replied:

"Give me thirty shekels, and to-morrow night, in the olive grove, I will deliver Jesus into your hands."

The shekels were counted on a table near the high priest. As Judas placed them in his purse, Caiaphas said:

"How will you deliver up Jesus to me?"

Judas answered:

"Behold, I will give you a sign—the sign of Jesus, the Son of God!"

"What sign, Judas?"

"A kiss!"

Down in Bethany, Jesus sat at the supper-table of Lazarus. He was surrounded by his friends. Even Judas was present, though he had entered late. But nobody minded that, for Judas was always going and coming, busy about his Master's affairs. Only Simon greeted him as he entered:

"Is the lamb ready?"

Judas, nodding, answered:

"The lamb is ready for the feast."

Simon alone noticed that he looked mysterious, and said:

"What is on your mind, friend?"

"The weight of the world, Simon, but not for long—not for long. . . . I tell you, not for long."

During the supper, Mary anointed the head of Jesus with nard. The odor of its perfume filled the house, and many of the disciples wondered at Mary's extravagance. They were poor fishermen, accustomed to the utmost simplicity of living, and to them this devotion of Mary's was uncalled for. They loved to honor Jesus, but fancied that he would disapprove of such reckless waste of money.

Judas, fingering the thirty shekels in his purse, calculated the cost of the nard and complained to Simon:

"She even broke the jar! Why, the flask was worth a deal of money, to say nothing of the ointment. All together, I reckon this extravagance at three hundred denarii!"

But Simon disagreed with Judas and the others, saying:

"If I could find a shekel in the mouth of every fish that I catch from now till my fishing

is done, I'd spend all that money to buy sandals for the Master's feet. Think, man, of what he has given us! Shall we begrudge him any honor?—Oh, that I had the gold and the jewels of King Solomon to lay at his feet!"

Hearing this dispute, Jesus looked at Judas and said:

"The poor you will always have with you, but me you will not always have. . . . Mary has prepared me for death."

Judas started from the table with a terrible cry:

"My God! Not for death, Master, not for death! You cannot die. You are the Messiah."

Jesus, leaning toward Judas, replied:

"For my death! How have you all missed the saying of the prophets that the Son of man must die? To overcome death, I must face it. Then one day there shall be no more death!"

"Ah," said Judas with satisfaction, "you will face death in order to destroy it? I see. . . . I see."

"Master, when will you restore the kingdom to Israel?" asked Simon eagerly.

He, too, misunderstood Jesus' reply, thinking that by "death," he referred to the war with Rome, for which he so ardently longed.

In answer to Simon's question, Jesus ad-

dressed the disciples; but, at the time, they did not understand what he said:

"Take care that no one misleads you; for many will come in my name saying, 'I am he,' and mislead you. And when you hear of wars and rumors of war, do not be alarmed; these have to come, but it is not the end. Nation will rise against nation. The ages will roll by. Men's hearts will fail them, looking for the coming of the kingdom. Meanwhile there will be confusion on the earth. Brother will betray brother to death. The father will betray his child. Children will rise against their parents and kill them, in my name. My coming has brought a sword into the world, and they who call me Lord will hate one another, wrangling over my words. Yet I, if I be lifted up from the earth and its quarrels and factions and creeds, will at last draw all men unto me; for though heaven and earth pass away, my words will abide with those who love me and keep my commandments."

There was silence in the supper-room when Jesus ended. Then, one by one, the guests began to depart, many of them muttering:

"I don't understand the man!"

Judas was among the first to go, followed by Simon and James. As they went, Simon said:

"There are times when our Master's words roll over my head like clouds. . . . I'm a man of action. When I'm doing things, I go straight; thinking drives me rattle and clack, like a windmill."

Judas, without a word, walked away into the night. He was sure now of the deed before him. Had not the Master said that he must face death?

After the going of the disciples, Jesus sat with John, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. To them he opened his heart, trying to make them understand the inevitableness of the cross. But they could not understand. Who in that day could have understood, except the Man who had dared to give himself up to the will of God? . . .

CHAPTER XXIV

AS A SERVANT

AGAIN and for the last time, Jesus visited the temple. It was the day of the paschal supper.

Leaving Bethany with his disciples, he climbed the Mount of Olives and sat down to watch the sun rise. A mist hung over the temple, like a veil with its corners held by the surrounding hills, a veil that suddenly parted as the sun looked over the peaks of the Perean mountains. Jerusalem in all its glory lay before him. How he loved that city! Tears fell from his eyes. Again he mourned:

"O Jerusalem! Would that you knew on what your peace depends! A time is coming when your enemies will throw up ramparts about you, encircle and besiege you. They will raze your walls to the ground, leaving not one stone upon another, because you did not receive me."

He passed on his way and entered the city. As he went along, Jesus told Simon and John to

prepare the supper in the house of John Mark's father, saying:

"He will show you a large room upstairs with couches spread. There I will eat the Passover with you, to-night."

All that day, Jesus taught in the temple. Words poured from his lips in parables of such beauty that they thrilled all hearers, even many of the priests. He told the story of a householder who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine-vat under it, built a watch-tower, leased it to the vine-dressers, and went abroad.

The crowd gathered about him, sitting at his feet, with eager, upturned faces, as Jesus led them to see that God was the Householder, Palestine the vineyard, the Covenant the wall, the Law the wine-vat, the temple the watch-tower, and Israel the vine-dressers.

The servants were the prophets whom the priests and Pharisees had flogged, stoned, and killed. But God had been patient. He had sent more servants, and when these, too, had been persecuted and killed, in mercy and gentle forgiveness He at last sent His son. But what did the vine-dressers do? They said:

"Here is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance."

This story smote the hearts of the priests. Many of them were angry, but a few were sorry, for they saw what Jesus meant. The story ended on the question:

"When the Owner of the vineyard comes and finds that the vine-dressers have thrown His son outside the vineyard and killed him, what will He do to them?"

Some of them answered:

"He will utterly destroy the wretches, and leave the vineyard to other vine-dressers!" From that moment, these priests loved Jesus and, later, walked in his steps.

But the majority of the priests foamed in anger and did their best to create a disturbance. Failing in that, they returned to Caiaphas and reported, saying:

"Let not the sun go down on this day without seizing and killing this heretic. He derides our authority and has unsettled the people. Let him be crucified! . . ."

When evening came, Jesus sat with his disciples in the upper room of John Mark's home. Gathered about a low table, the disciples reclined on rugs with their Master. The events of the past week had disturbed them. Dimly they saw the shadow of their ordeal, and shrank

from it. They were uneasy and tried to hide behind an argument concerning their places in the kingdom of God. Would they be kings, each on a throne, and with equal power of government; or would some have primacy over others?

Jesus, knowing their hearts, let them talk. How he loved them! And how like children they were! For a moment he was troubled by the thought: "Can these simple men continue my work?" He had entrusted all his heart to them. He had tried to make them see his vision of a world-wide brotherhood. And here they were, on the eve of his death, debating about primacy of place; as though there could be that in the kingdom of God, where all would be equal!

He arose, and without a word, took a basin of water and, girding himself with a towel, knelt at Simon's feet.

Sweet humility! . . . He who was the highest among men bowed in service at the feet of a fisherman.

Simon understood and shrank from the terrible rebuke of his kneeling Master. He cried:

"No, Master! You must not bow before me. I am a sinful man. You are the holiest of the prophets, the Lord Messiah! Your humility rebukes me!"

Jesus looked up into Simon's face, and said:

"My brother, if you do not let me wash your feet, you will have no part with me in the kingdom of God."

Swiftly came Simon's answer:

"Then, Lord, wash me from foot to head, that I may be next to you in your glory!"

Jesus answered:

"Simon, do you not understand? This that I do is a sign to you that you all must wash one another's feet; for in the kingdom of God we are one. Be not like the rulers of the earth. They love titles and crowns and beautiful vestments. Well, they have what they want. You must never claim titles, crowns, vestments. Be servants. He who serves most shall have most. I am among you as a servant, and my law is love!"

When Jesus came to Judas, he kissed that disciple's feet and said:

"My brother! . . . My brother!"

Returning to his rug, Jesus began to talk pleasantly with the disciples. Never had his words been so wonderful. He told them a story of the grape-vine, how its roots draw sweetness from the ground in sap that gives life to the trunk and its branches, until the grapes hang in clusters from the stem:

"I am that vine. You are its branches. All that flows through me from the Father enters into you. Always abide in me. Let nothing separate you from our common life which the Father bestows on us all. And never be afraid of the world. If the world denies me, it will deny you, who call me Master. Is the servant above his lord? As men will do to me, so will they do to you. For my sake you will be scorned, rejected, tortured, and killed; for mine is no easy task. Take up that task, O my beloved, without fear of the world, for I have already overcome it."

Jesus bowed his head in prayer, and as he prayed, Simon went over to him, and lay weeping at his Master's feet.

This was the prayer of Jesus in the upper room of John Mark's home:

"Father, the time has now come. I have finished the work You gave me to do. Keep my beloved ones together, that they all may be one in You even as I am. For their sakes I consecrate myself to death, that they may go forth after me, doing my works."

Jesus took the Passover cake, blessed and broke it, and said as he gave it to his disciples:

"In this I give you my body. Take, eat in memory of me."

Reverently the disciples ate of the bread, looking in love on their Master. They did not understand his words, though they felt their mystery.

Then Jesus took the cup of wine, and said:

"This is my blood which I will shed for you and all the world. Take, drink it, and remember me."

The disciples drank of the cup, mingling their tears with the wine; for sorrow was in their hearts as they heard the foreboding words of their Master: "This is my blood, shed for you and all the world."

When the cup was returned to Jesus, he said:

"All you shall be offended at me to-night. It is written: 'I will smite the shepherd, and scatter the sheep!' "

With a shout of anger, Simon arose and cried out:

"By the veil of the temple, Master, this shall not be. We are all your friends. We will not suffer you to be hurt for our sakes!"

"Simon, Simon," answered Jesus, "before the crowing of the cock, you will deny that you know me."

"Deny you, Master! . . . Deny you! . . . Though all these deny you, I will not. Though the prison of Pilate and the cross be my fate, I will not deny you!"

"You will, Simon; and one of my friends will betray me."

There was an uproar among the disciples. They stood with Simon and shouted:

"No! No!"

And Judas shouted louder than the others:

"No! No!"

Then Jesus said:

"One of you will betray me. Alas for him! For that deed he will be remembered as a traitor. He will be hated, and despised, and misunderstood. If he could see, as I see, he would wish that he had never been born."

Returning to their places about the table, the disciples asked:

"Master, is it I?"

And Judas was louder than the rest when he said:

"Lord, is it I?"

Quietly Jesus answered Judas:

"You have said. . . . What you do, do quickly."

Proudly, as though he had received a royal command, Judas left the table and went out of the supper-room into the night.

The other disciples looked at him in amazement, and some said:

"Will Judas betray the Master?"

But Simon answered:

"What are you talking about? Have your wits left you? Judas loves our Master. He has gone forth to serve him."

This comforted the disciples, and soon gay chatter filled the supper-room; though John, leaning on Jesus' breast, said:

"Dear Master, why are there tears in your eyes?"

And Jesus answered:

"I weep for Judas!"

After that, Jesus stood, his disciples with him, and sang:

"Give thanks to the Eternal!—he is good,
His kindness never fails.
Let Israel repeat,
'His kindness never fails';
Let Aaron's house repeat,
'His kindness never fails';
Let the Eternal's worshippers repeat,
'His kindness never fails.'"

Leaving the supper-room, they passed through the gate of the city, and, descending the valley of the Kidron, crossed the brook and climbed to an olive grove called Gethsemane.

Jesus turned to the disciples and said:

"Rest, while I go yonder to pray; for my heart is heavy unto death."

The disciples looked in wonder at Jesus. His face was sad. It was not like him to be sad. Puzzled, unhappy, bewildered, they sat together on the hillside, and watched Jesus disappear among the trees with Simon, James, and John. . . . Why did he take some of their number into the grove and leave the rest behind?

"He did that on Mount Hermon," said Andrew.

"True, that he did. Always, in certain moments, he takes these three with him. They are in his secret, and later we shall know. Let us rest here, my brothers. Who are we to question the Master and his ways? Did he not say that we are all equal?" The speaker was Nathanael, the man in whom there was no guile.

When Jesus entered Gethsemane, he turned to John and said:

"Watch with me. You understand. This is the hour. And you, Simon and James—you, too, were with me on the mountain with Moses and Elijah. Blessed are your eyes that saw, and your ears that heard. Now you shall see me in my weakness; for, friends, I am heavy with sorrow, and need you. Watch and pray with me."

The disciples knelt among the trees, while Jesus went on alone. John watched and saw Jesus throw himself on the ground in bitterness

of sorrow. Simon shuddered as he heard sobbing. James smote his breast when he saw the sweat of an immortal anguish on the Master's brow.

Amazed and overcome, they whispered among themselves and asked:

"Why is the Master sorrowful?"

Simon was sure that it was grief over the hardness of the priests. James said that it was for Judas. But John shook his head and urged:

"My brothers, you are wrong. A mysterious sorrow is this. Our Master's heart is broken because of the hatred that is among men. He knows that until that hatred is removed, men will suffer, women lament, and children cry. He is wounded for our transgressions, and only by those scars shall we be healed."

With deep, rending sobs, these words came from the Master:

"My Father, my Father! I feel Your loneliness and measure Your love. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. O forgive us for wounding, betraying, and denying You. Father, I am here to obey You. Visit on me the sins of the world and through me bring eternal life to light; for this is eternal life, to know You."

There was silence in the olive grove, silence

so deep that the disciples forgot their promise and slept, though John, as he passed into sleep, heard the Master plead:

"Father, not my will but Your will!"

After a while, the darkness of the night was pierced by torches that floated across the Kidron, halting over the heads of the disciples who lay asleep outside Gethsemane.

"What sort of warriors are these, who sleep at the outpost of their king?" laughed the temple guard in derision.

Startled from their sleep, the disciples looked up at the rough-speaking soldiers and, with a cry of fear, ran down the hill, forgetful of their Master! . . .

In their flight, they did not recognize Judas. The darkness concealed him. He had no torch.

As the disciples ran, Judas said to the guard:

"Come, follow me. He whom I kiss is Jesus. Take him to Caiaphas."

Past Simon, James, and John, they marched with such heavy tread that these awoke in time to see Judas greet Jesus with a kiss, crying:

"Hail, Master!"

They heard Jesus say:

"Judas, do you betray me with a kiss?"

Judas cowered before these words and muttered brokenly:

"Wait and see, Lord. . . . Now is your hour. Take it."

When the soldiers saw Jesus, they saluted him. They had come to find a peasant, and had found a king!

The Master approached the soldiers and said:

"Are you come with swords and clubs to take me, as though I were a thief? I sat daily in the temple. Why did you not seize me then? But this is your hour."

With a shout of fury, Simon burst into the midst of the soldiers and, tearing from one of them his sword, began to curse lustily:

"Come on, you legions of the devil! Though all the armies of Cæsar were in the way, I would cut a road through them to the feet of my Master!"

Then Jesus called to Simon:

"Put up that sword! No man may use force in my name! O doubting friend, if it were my Father's will, I should have His angels for a guard."

The sword fell from Simon's hand. He was paralyzed with fear for the Master, and turned to John, saying:

"What shall I do? He won't let me fight for him."

And John answered:

"Simon, obey, even unto death."

Simon threw away his sword and ran out of the garden, sobbing:

"O my God! My God! They are taking the Master to prison and to death!"

The torches flared and swords clashed to the footsteps of mailed men, as Jesus went forth from Gethsemane to Golgotha.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PASCHAL LAMB

As Jesus went on his way, Judas followed expectantly, looking for a sudden manifestation of his Master's power. He smiled and whispered to himself:

"Will he do it now, or will he wait till he stands before Caiaphas? . . . My heart breaks under the strain. . . . God! I feel as though I were being tortured for the redemption of Israel. . . . Ah, but one day, men will recall my deed and I shall be glorified. . . . Futility of Simon—drawing a sword! . . . and John with his smug words! . . . Though the man may have seen the light . . . he may have seen the light. . . . How meekly the Master goes on his way! . . . God! if he should withhold his powers! . . . It would mean crucifixion, and I . . . Oh, I dare not think of that, for I should be cursed by all men. . . . Here, here! I must stop this. . . . I must not flinch. . . . I am right, the others are wrong. Wait till he shows us. Wait till he shows us."

From afar, Simon followed, weeping:

"Oh, they are taking Jesus to Caiaphas. . . . Caiaphas would not dare to touch the Lord's Anointed; for then the sun would be darkened and the earth quake and give up its dead. . . . No, no! Caiaphas would not dare to hurt the Master. . . . Who is that slinking along like a starved dog? . . . Judas!"

Stealing close to Jesus, John looked for a sign from him. But the Master walked with downcast eyes. His face was wet with tears! . . . Would the Master accept the cross? Well, he knew what he was about, and if he did accept the cross, he would use it for victory. Nothing could interfere with the Master's work . . . nothing . . . nothing. . . .

Tramp, crash, tramp, went the mailed guard on their way to Caiaphas. The torches flared on the bowed head of Jesus, walking among his captors, with fettered hands. . . . The tears on his face were for Judas!

It was now midnight. The stars hung low in a purple sky. The moon was full, above the massed splendor of the temple.

The soldiers, stopping for a moment at the outer gate of the palace of Annas, to leave a hurried word with the guard, passed higher along the slope of the hill and entered the courtyard of Caiaphas.

Tramp, crash, tramp! The courtyard was flooded with the light from the torches. A door opened. Leaving the guard, the centurion led his prisoner up a flight of marble steps, past a colonnade of arches and pillars, till he stood in the hall of Caiaphas, who sat with the Sanhedrin.

Jesus lifted his head proudly and looked at Caiaphas. His eyes were steady. Before that gaze, Caiaphas shifted restlessly, drumming with his fingers on the ivory arms of his canopied throne.

Then Caiaphas spoke. His voice was sonorous. His words were studied. The pomp of his priesthood was in every gesture. The situation was his. Why should he feel uncomfortable in the presence of a fettered Galilean carpenter? . . . The man was insolent to look at him so levelly. Well, he would tame him before daybreak!

"Jesus of Nazareth, you are arraigned for sedition and blasphemy. What have you to say for yourself?"

The Sanhedrin waited tensely for Jesus' reply. There was silence in the great hall. . . .

Would he never speak? . . . What a man! . . . A pity to nail him to a cross! . . . Why couldn't he be reasonable and give up his

absurd claims? . . . Why was the man silent? Why didn't he answer the high priest? . . . Ah, the fellow deserved his fate. He was like all Galileans, obdurate, self-willed, rebellious!

With rising anger audible in his voice, Caiaphas cried:

"Answer me, man of Nazareth!"

But the tall, fettered man before him only gazed with stern, level eyes.

"Call the witnesses," said Caiaphas, again shifting his glance. . . . "Pest take the fellow," he thought. "I'll make him talk!"

At the word of Caiaphas, the witnesses were called—two priests who attested that they had heard the prisoner say he would destroy the temple and build a better.

"Did you say that, Jesus?" roared Caiaphas.

Jesus was silent.

Then Caiaphas, forgetting his dignity, brushed the witnesses aside with an impatient hand, and stood up glittering in his vestments. He was an imposing figure. All the majesty of his high office was on him, as he thundered, pointing with accusing finger:

"Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Jesus answered quietly:

"You have said it."

The members of the Sanhedrin started from their stalls and began to shout:

"Blasphemy! . . . Blasphemy!" while Caiaphas rent his outer vestment and cried: "Fathers, what do you think?"

Like the croak of vultures, the Sanhedrin replied:

"He is worthy of death!"

Meanwhile, in the outer court, Simon crouched above a brazier of coals, warming his hands. Higher and near the door of the great hall stood John, watching, with tormented eyes, for the appearance of Jesus. . . . Would he never come out? . . . What were they doing in there with the Master?

One of the maids of the palace passed by with wine and cakes for the temple guard, and seeing Simon, who was talking wildly with one of the soldiers, said to him:

"You are a Galilean. You talk like your Master!"

Simon looked up fearfully. If he was to help Jesus out of all this trouble, he must hide from his enemies. . . . Well, there was only one thing left—to lie! It would never do for him to be caught.

With great, round Galilean oaths, Simon began to swear that he had never met Jesus, and

as he swore, the sound of a gong from within reverberated through the court. The door of the hall opened, and there stood Jesus, looking at Simon, who met his Master's eyes without flinching, until he remembered the warning of Jesus: "Before the crowing of the cock, you will deny that you know me."

Turning from his Master's gaze, Simon ran out of the court and cried:

"O my God! My God! I have failed him! Now let me die. I am not fit to live, who have denied the Master!"

As Simon left the court, John drew near to Jesus, saying quietly:

"Master!"

But Jesus only smiled and passed on his way.

After he had been insulted by the soldiers of the temple, and had been brought again before Caiaphas, Jesus was led to Pilate.

The place of judgment was the Prætorium, an extension of the castle of Antonia, rebuilt by Herod the Great and dedicated to his friend, Mark Antony. Here, surrounded by his court and army, the Roman governor lived in splendor worthy of Cæsar.

Seated on a throne at the end of the hall of

judgment, Pilate received Jesus and his accusers.

Pilate had heard of this young prophet, and was glad to talk with him. Amazing stories of the man's power had come to him. Procula, his wife, and her friends had gossiped freely about the healing gifts of this Galilean Æsculapius. . . .

As for that, the stories might be true—one heard of remarkable things these days. . . . If this man Jesus were a genuine healer, he might cure a bad fit of insomnia. . . . In any case, he might have something to say about political conditions in Galilee, where they were always stirring up trouble for Cæsar. . . . Perdition on these Jews! . . . Why weren't they reasonable, like the other races whom Rome had bettered by conquest?

So thought Pilate, royal in a toga of Tyrian dye, as he sat, massive and imperious, upon the throne of judgment.

As the trial proceeded, Pilate saw that Jesus was harmless politically. He liked this tall young god from Galilee. . . .

"Jove! He is like golden Apollo himself, standing there, so proud, so royal, so courteous!" thought Pilate. "What a shame to crucify a man like that!"

Here Pilate asked Jesus:

"Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Do you mean an earthly or a spiritual king?"

"Man, I am not interested in a spiritual king. What I mean is, are you Herod's rival?"

"I am no man's rival. My kingdom is not like Herod's or Cæsar's. If my kingdom were like theirs, I should meet you to-day with an army."

"Ah! Your kingdom is a kind of Platonic Republic?"

"My kingdom is in the hearts of men. Where two or three lovers are met, there is my kingdom."

"A kingdom of lovers? Ha! You'll not go far in this world, my Apollo, with such notions as that. Can you change the nature of man? He will always fight, because he will always be envious of his neighbor's good. Though this world last a million years, man will always be a warrior, I tell you."

"There you are wrong, Pilate. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. In the end my words will change man, and war shall be no more. This is why I came into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

Pilate arose and, with a weary smile and impatient gesture to his guard, said:

"What is truth?"

He could not help yon Galilean. What a pity! . . . What a pity! . . . Best hand him over to Herod and be rid of the matter.

Later, Jesus stood before Herod Antipas. He remembered a boyhood's day in Sepphoris. How he had hated Herod, sitting like a fat, mottled spider in the web of his weaving.

Time had made Herod more loathsome. Yes, he was like a fox! And when he gloated through puffy eyes at Jesus, the Master returned that look with white anger. The old passion of his race was molten in his veins. Here was the image of all hell which he had come to destroy. Herod was not a man; he was Satan —Satan, the enemy of God and man! Well, he had met him in many forms, but here was his ugliest. He would make no truce with Satan.

Herod questioned Jesus, offering him honors if he would work magic, such as Moses had wrought before Pharaoh. Jesus was silent. His silence made Herod uncomfortable. Squirming on his throne, he thought:

"Perhaps this man is John the Baptist. I have heard of such a thing—how a discarnate soul

may return to earth by occupying the body of one willing, as it were, to be crowded out. . . . Pest on that Salome! I ought never to have yielded to her bloody demand."

Rage broke loose in the heart of Herod. He would humiliate the man who had so humiliated him. He clapped his hands, and called:

"Robe this man in an old vestment, and lead him back to Pilate."

Again Jesus stood before Pilate, but this time he wore a king's vestment. On his head was a mock crown of thorns, and in his fettered hands a withered reed!

Pilate was troubled. He had hoped that Herod would dispose of Jesus' case. . . . Well, a governor's work must be done; but first he would again try to save Jesus.

"I have tried the prisoner," he said to the Sanhedrin, "and find him innocent of a capital offense. I sent him to Herod, but Herod has only laughed. . . . I will scourge him and let him go."

"Crucify him!" yelled the priests.

"What! Crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Cæsar. . . . No king but Cæsar . . . but Cæsar . . . Cæsar!" rolled back the reply from the splitting throats of the Sanhedrin.

Pilate was baffled. He shrank from giving up Jesus to death. Suddenly his brow cleared, and he said:

"It is the custom to release at this time a notable prisoner. You have your choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Take Jesus who is innocent of political offense, while Barabbas has been found guilty of insurrection."

"No, no!" yelled the now furious priests. "Give us Barabbas. Let Jesus be crucified. He calls himself a king. Barabbas never did that. If you let Jesus go, you are not Cæsar's friend!"

Pilate whitened with fear. True, it would not please old Tiberius, gnashing his yellow teeth in his villa at Capreæ. Tiberius was easily troubled by rumors of rivalry. If he should hear that a so-called Galilean king had been set free, it would bode ill for his Judean governor. There was no way out. . . . But stop! Perhaps, if he handed Jesus over to the scourgers, the priests would be satisfied. Surely they would not demand the death of this magnificent Apollo from Galilee!

After the scourgers had mutilated Jesus with their thongs of leather, tipped with bone, Pilate stood before the Sanhedrin, saying:

"Here is a man—the goodliest I have ever seen. I have scourged him. Be satisfied. Send

him back to his carpenter's bench in Nazareth. He'll give you no more trouble!"

"Away with him to Golgotha!" shouted the priests. "We'll not have him. He troubles the nation. He disturbs our peace. He breaks our laws. He is not a Jew . . . he is not a Jew. We have cast him out of the temple and our synagogues! . . . Crucify him. . . . Crucify him. . . . Crucify him!"

Then followed the saddest spectacle witnessed by the eyes of man on this planet. To the roaring of the mob, Jesus, bearing his cross, was led forth from Jerusalem to Golgotha.

As he went along, pitiful cries of lamenting women mingled with the hoots and yells of the rabble. Then, out of the confusion of sound, the well-remembered voice which the people loved to hear was heard, saying:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but for those who have rejected me!"

The voice of Jesus was heard no more, until, hanging on the cross, he shook the hills with a cry:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Standing outside the crowd, Simon gazed with burning eyes and envied the two thieves

who were crucified, the one on the right, the other on the left of his Master. . . . What was he saying to one of the thieves? Oh, that Jesus might talk that way to him! . . .

"To-day you and I will find Paradise together!"

Under the cross, John, Mary of Nazareth, and Mary of Bethany, stood unafraid and looking up.

Mary of Nazareth had thrown away all fear. Her beautiful son was on a cross! . . . God had betrayed her, as He had betrayed her son, who now mourned brokenly:

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

Mary of Bethany kissed and kissed the wounded feet. Oh, that she might anoint them now with healing myrrh!

John wondered as he wept. He was thinking of that day in Capernaum, when Jesus had come to the workshop of Zebedee. . . . Would not Jesus come down from the cross? Surely he would . . . surely he would!

As though answering John's unspoken words, Judas, from his place on a high rock behind Golgotha, called across the heads of the mockers:

"Master, Master! You are the Son of God!

You are the Messiah! Come down from the cross! . . . Come down from the cross! . . . Now is the time for the great miracle that will convince the world! . . . Come down from the cross!"

With jeering cries, the priests and Pharisees called up to the drooping, thorn-crowned head:

"Come down from the cross, if you are the Messiah. . . . You Saviour of men, save yourself. . . . Come down from the cross. . . . We will believe in you, if you come down from the cross."

To these taunts Jesus made no reply. He had not heard them; he was lost in memories of a night of stars and a cool wind and a mother's croodling song:

Little boy Jesus,
Tell what you are—
Moondrift and white cloud
Caught on a star!

Little boy Jesus,
What did you see?
Berries and blossoms
In Galilee!

Little boy Jesus,
Where did you go?
Down by the Jordan,
Watching it flow!

Little boy Jesus,
What is your will?
Wood for a cradle
On a green hill.

So this was the cradle! It was a comfortable cradle. He was a tired, hurt, sleepy little boy, gentled in a cradle by the crooning lullabies of his mother. . . . How great was the love of a mother—like the love of God, who had given His Son to the world that through him that world might one day be saved from crosses, and wars, and hatred, and the tears of death. . . . A cross is a comfortable cradle to a man who has learned to accept it! . . .

After that, there was a mist before the eyes of Jesus, like the mist rising over the lake of Galilee, with the moon breaking through. Jesus could see no more. . . . The world was gone. . . . He was alone in eternity, pleading with God for man!

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